THE OLD COMMODORE.

VOL. III.

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THE

OLD COMMODORE.

BY THE

AUTHOR OF "RATTLIN THE REEFER," &c.

"NESTROQUE!"

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

LONDON:
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THE OLD COMMODORE.

CHAPTER I.

"Ye powers who act the needful part,
Whipping sins ye discover;
Starve, starve the love that spoils the heart,
But do not starve the lover."

Old Song.

Mr. Rubasore was embarrassed. He looked into his patient's countenance, and his heart smote him: however, he was determined to play the part through that he had assumed, for already had his wish to gain the name and the history of the supposed spy a little subsided. Just then he felt that he dare not impertinently question her.

At length they were seated, side by side; and Mr. Rubasore, after some hesitation, commenced in the usual manner, by making the most common-place remarks that it can be supposed that the human mind can entertain, short of mere foolishness.

After they found that they were both of the same opinion—that, if it did not rain, or become disagreeably hot or cold, the day would turn out fine—and a good deal more conversation of the same weight and urgency, Mr. Rubasore hemmed very professionally, and, at length, possessed himself of her wrist.

To all his inquiries she returned short answers, but in the sweetest tones that he thought he ever had heard. When her pale lips unclosed, he became aware that her silence concealed a set of the most splendid teeth—teeth that seemed only made for the purpose of being the ivory portals for smiles—yet smile there was none. Her lips unclosed and revealed the inner beauty, but joy had deserted her choicest residence.

Mr. Rubasore, being a generally well-informed man, did not play the part that he had assumed, ill. The symptoms, however, puzzled him exceedingly. There was evidently no fever; the pulse was regular, though slow and languid. She had no cough, no difficulty of breathing, no tightness across the chest. Her appetite was neither bad nor good; she did not care for her food, yet she ate it in sufficient quantities, when placed before her—at least, she said so.

Of what she most complained, was the horror of her dreams. She could find no rest for them; she trembled to sleep, and scarcely dared close her eyes. She begged Mr. Rubasore not to prescribe opium for her in any shape, for it only increased her sufferings, and drove her to the very verge of madness.

When she had yielded him all this information in the fewest words possible, and which cost him many to extract, he came, of course, to the conclusion that hers was the old story, "a mind diseased;" and then he felt himself convinced

that the secret with which he wished to become acquainted was of the greater importance. He had other, and far deeper motives also, with which, at present, we have nothing to do, and which, too, he hardly dared avow to himself.

He next questioned her as to her regimen. The answers on this head appalled him. Notwithstanding all her cautiousness, he plainly perceived that both father and daughter were striving who best could endure famine, and who best could cheat the other into the belief that they ate every day as much as they desired. And yet they owed no money, and no shop in the neighbourhood could compete with that of M. Florentin for neatness, and an appearance of comfort. Rosalie was in her dress, not only clean, but *bien gentile.*

Much has been truly and justly said in praise of the dignified fall of the assassinated Cæsar before Pompey's statue, and of the quiet heroism of the acts of his dying moments, of his " in his mantle wrapping up himself," so that he

might expire with majesty and decorum, and be, even in death, calm, and sustained, and great. But what is all this compared to the exalted endurance of these two unfriended foreigners? The dagger of starvation was making its savage way through their bosoms, yet they cried not out to the passers by, and showed not their wounds to those near them; but enfolding themselves in their mantles of respectability, each had prepared to die uncomplaining before that altar, whose sanctity man nor woman should ever violate—the altar of self-respect.

This was too much, even for the selfish Rubasore. The better part of his nature triumphed. When he fully understood the nature of the case, he rose, and said, "that he should take time to consider of the symptoms, and prescribe the necessary remedies early the next day."

He asked no more questions of Rosalie, but kindly taking leave, descended into the shop. When there, Mr. Rubasore began to ruminate

deeply. He had time. There was a customer under the operation of being shaved. He watched the whole process with a philosophical attention, and it did much to make him a better man—for the next four hours.

The man was a sturdy and morose-looking coal-heaver; he was in an ill-temper; there he sat, with M. Florentin's whitest of napkins under his chin, and in contact with his dirt-imbedded black frock. The beard was of the growth of many days, and might be compared to a crop of tenpenny nails, points upwards, growing out of a bed of gravel. There was a frothy lather made round the lower part of the visage, that was in magnitude equal to the unkempt black crop above, and in admirable contrast with it. As the razor passed through this mass, the gritty particles of coal and other hard substances might be heard grinding against, and turning the edge of the razor, the man swearing and wincing, and M. Florentin moving about him with all the tender assiduity

of a nurse near a sick child. The politeness of the barber was imperturbable; but neither the beard of the coal-heaver, nor his iron stubble, was to be softened by all the emollient applications that it was in the power of the poor foreigner to apply.

However, the tedious operation was at length finished, and the man washed and dried, and then, for all this attention, waste of soap and of time, and the dirtying of two or three towels, —for all this, M. Florentin received one penny and a curse.

We know all this to be dreadfully low; but let us, only for a little while, descend to it, with Mr. Rubasore, and we may derive some wholesome reflections from it. That Mr. Rubasore did, we know. He discovered that the very highest virtues may be exercised in the very lowest stations; and that the vices of arrogance, and a disregard to the feelings of others, are not confined to the classes who may be supposed to care little for those that are beneath them.

He also discovered that a man may be purse-proud with no purse, and with only two-pence in his pocket; that, in spending one penny of it, he may exhibit more contemptible vanity than is shown in the disposal of thousands of pounds; and that, though starvation make the body perish, it will never destroy those vices that are common to the overfed as well as to him that lacks a crust to keep him from his last gasp.

"Methinks," said Mr. Rubasore, "that that is a penny very hardly earned."

"Honestly as hardly, Monsieur. How do you find Rosalie?"

"I will be plain with you. With too much on her mind, and too little on her stomach."

"You assassinate me—vous m'assassinez. Juste ciel! what am I to do?"

"You must make her eat, and I will make her speak. You are not very well yourself; I must prescribe for you, too. Now I am peculiar in my medical views. I work as little by

medicine as I can—and almost wholly by regimen. I will write for both of you. I will be your friend, but you must obey my orders implicitly."

So, instead of writing in bad latin a worse prescription of nauseous drugs, he wrote three good bills of fare, one for breakfast, one for dinner, and one for an early supper, with a small rider about tea.

When M. Florentin read this, I will not say that his hair stood on an end, for it was closely shaved off, but he lifted his eye-brows so much, and puckered up his forehead so highly with astonishment, as to make his toupée first rise, and then fall back, considerably.

" Céstune chose not possible!" said he, laying his spread and emaciated hand over his breast; "and, monsieur, we are not eight in family."

" As to the impossibility, leave that to Providence and your physician. As to the number of your family, I expect that, be it small,

or be it great, that all that I prescribe be duly consumed. Ah! M. Florentin, as yet you are unacquainted with the English atmosphere. In France you have so many things to live upon—pardon me; there's your national vanity, your inimitable gaiety, your beautiful and elastic air—but in England nothing will support life but food, food, food—and so, I say to you, feed, feed, feed."

He then, without adverting to the cause that first impelled him to enter his shop, took a kind leave of the surprised barber, promising to repeat his call, at the same time, on the morrow.

M. Florentin's reflections were of the least consoling nature. He was very hungry—but that he did not much mind, for he was used to it—but he could not, with anything short of madness, entertain the idea that Rosalie was, or ever had been, suffering from unappeased hunger. There was the torture. It was dinner-time. He looked at the prescription. It

ordered two large mutton chops, for each, not too much done, with two good sized potatoes. One pint of strong ale for monsieur, and two glasses of good port wine for ma'amselle; there were some little delicacies mentioned for the lady, that she was to have by all means if she felt at all disposed to them. At reading this, the good old Frenchman's eyes and mouth watered, *à l'envie les uns de l'autre.* He had, to procure all this, just earned one penny, and a malediction, the latter of which went for nothing. Besides, there was no fire, and it being late in June, they had not lighted one all that day.

In the midst of this perplexity—and this perplexity had lasted him nearly an hour,—the gentle voice of his daughter called him upstairs to dinner. He put the chain up to the shop-door, in such a manner as to give notice of any one entering, and went into the room on the first floor. There, on a small round table, was placed a scrupulously clean cloth, two penny rolls, not very new, and not very large, for,

during the revolutionary war, farmers rejoiced in high prices,—and in the middle of the table, on an ample dish, two lettuces. If there was not *pain à discretion*, there was water—and the cups and the plates, and the knives and forks, were so clean, that they were enough to create an appetite "within the ribs of death."

The fare was certainly light and poetical—it was, that which young ladies are accustomed to read of in novels, so much patronised by their heroines—"a *slight* refection." The only thing that could be advanced against it was, that it was too "slight."

With Rubasore's prescription in one hand, and the hard-earned penny in the other, the poor refugee looked ruefully on these "delicate cates." However, "il faut manger pour vivre, et non pas vivre pour manger;" with this aphorism in his mouth, which he would willingly have filled with something more substantial, he commenced dressing the salad; that is, with a small portion of vinegar, much diluted

with water, added to the least possible quantity of oil.

During this preparation the working of Rosalie's upper-lip was excessive, and betokened extreme suffering; yet no word of complaint nor any tear would she permit to betray the state of her mind.

"*Le voilà prêt.* Now, Rosalie, my girl, make as hearty a meal as you can;" but she would not allow her father to place the little-sustaining herb upon her plate, and pushed over her one roll towards him.

"Father," said she, "I have dined. Here, do you not see the crumbs, and the remnants? Pardon me that I did not wait."

"How is that possible, Rosalie? I know that we had but this food in the house."

And now the blush that health refused to her beauty, her virtues, and her filial piety, appeared at the call of Shame, when she uttered the falsehood; but the stain was on her cheek only. Her heart was the more gloriously pure

for it, and filial love sanctified the act, and gloried in the artifice of the scattered crumbs.

"True, my father; but I had earned a few pence by making up a little lace, and the good woman that lodges above us procured me bread, and even a little meat. Pardon me again, that I waited not for you. I am—I mean—I was very hungry."

"Pardon!" said M. Florentin, with his mouth filled with one roll; "no, Rosalie,"—and here half the lettuce disappeared—"I should ask pardon of you,"—the other roll was now in his jaws—"for not better supporting"—the other half of the lettuce had disappeared—"a daughter so every way amiable,"—and here the whole dinner was bolted. "*Le voilà tout*—let us thank God for our repast, though, in truth, I have still great hunger."

The good Frenchman did not perceive the wolfish glare that shone in the eyes of his daughter, as he devoured this sorry meal; but, whilst he was drinking copiously of the water,

he caught, at a glance, her hurried action of sweeping every crumb off the table into the palm of her hand, and voraciously swallowing them. The truth flashed on the parent immediately; he turned to her sharply, and exclaimed, in a tone of great anger, "Rosalie, you have deceived me,—you, my child, have said the thing that is not. You have not dined —you are famished—you are starving."

"My kind father!"—the poor girl could say no more, but burst into a fit of weeping.

"I have still this penny, what can we sell?"

But, before he could say more, the rattling of the chain at the shop-door made him aware that some one had entered—and now he hears the footsteps of more than one person upon the narrow and dark stairs.

"Dry up your tears, Rosalie," said he, hastily. "Compose yourself, and do not let these hard-hearted English witness our distress."

He then stepped towards the door to fasten it; but he was anticipated; it was flung open,

and in walked a waiter, bearing a covered dish, and then another, and another, and before either daughter or father had recovered from their astonishment, they saw their small table crowded with excellently dressed hot mutton-chops, two dishes of vegetables, a bottle of port wine, and a pot of foaming ale.

With knife and fork in hand, which so ravishing a vision had caused him unconsciously to seize, M. Florentin asked for an explanation, which was immediately given him by the head-waiter of a neighbouring tavern, who had headed this glorious procession. He merely said "that the physician who had called in the morning, had bargained with his master to supply M. Florentin with two substantial meals a-day, with a pint of wine for mademoiselle; and he trusted that monsieur was satisfied with this, the first specimen."

Voluble if not eloquent in his thanks, M. Florentin pushed the waiter out of the room by the shoulders whilst he was uttering them—

and then—and then Monsieur Florentin dined twice, and ma'amselle broke her fast.

It is certain that if Miss Belmont had known of this act, which looks so like a generous one, it would have served Mr. Rubasore much more than he served himself in his laboured letter; it is certain that, when Mr. Rubasore had resolved upon doing it, he felt all over him a glow of satisfaction, as delicious as it was new to him; yet, it is also certain, that Mr. Rubafore deserves no credit for it whatever. I say not this in an invidious spirit; still less, because he always spoke of me in my absence as, and called me to my face, an unserviceable pensioner; but because it was, at its best, little better than a mere sensual gratification; very little higher in desert than that pleasure which we feel in feeding caged and hungry animals. It cost him no sacrifice, for the mere expense was, to him, absolutely not perceptible. Now had this father and daughter, notwithstanding the heroic and filial devotion of the one, and the

gentle probity and polished urbanity of the other, been placed in any way so in contact with him, that he must acknowledge in them some rights, and respect in them some privileges, he, this man of dinner-donations, would have mocked those privileges, invaded those rights, and have endeavoured to place them, with all the power of his malice, in some unpleasant and inferior light.

It is upon this very principle that ladies, and gentlemen too, keep, and love pet animals, and, wonderful to relate! take to themselves credit for such monstrous affections. Lady Vilainame shall be alienated from her own mother, mortally hate her twin-sister, and shall have driven her only child from her doors, yet be overflowing with tenderness for an ugly and brutish lap-dog. Sir Hickery Rasp shall have driven a whole village out of their homes, to starve in the most inclemeut weather; he shall boast that he hates the poor, and yet be indulgently kind to his spaniel, so kind indeed, that

he will risk his life in a duel with the man whom he calls his friend to avenge a wrong put upon this dog.

But these affections prove not the love, but the tyranny of the human heart. These animals have no rights—nothing which demands respect; they ask for nothing, thus they gain all. They are things over which to exercise empire; we can play the despot on them, and therefore we love them.

If a lady or gentleman tell you they love their pets for certain presumed good qualities, believe them not. There is a vast harvest of virtues in their fellow-creatures, which they might garner into their bosoms, and there feed their best affections; but this they will not have;—they want an abject dependence, something on which to exercise the love of rule!

Alas! for poor human nature!

"Down, Pompey! down! I will not be so fondled upon! It is downright sycophancy. I'll have none of it. Look you, sirrah!—look

you; there is my brother-man coming towards us. Down, sirrah, and bark and snarl at him if you dare. You do not like rags, Pompey! but I tell you he's my brother! Lie down, Pompey. The man has a villanous look, however. Yet is he a fellow-sharer with me in the blessed privilege of immortality. Well, well; say no more,—there is money for you—I am poor myself—my half-pay will scarcely permit me to. keep up the necessary appearance of a gentleman—it will not indeed, my good man. You should not be ungrateful. What is my dog to you—better fed and housed, hey! Away with you, man; it is with my own money. You grow impertinent; rights of the poor indeed! what right have they to be impudent, sir? Don't presume upon my age! I am Captain Dribble. Be off, or I'll put the vagrant act in force. And it is quite terrible to hear a poor man swear in that way. Hie thee here, Pompey; O my good dog, my dear dog; and it loves its own master so!—

Pompey, after all, you are the old mariner's best friend."

Alas! for poor human nature!

CHAPTER II.

" The vengeful man is one
Who on his own heart feedeth, until all
It had of human, wastes, and then a globe
Of living fire burns in his bosom ever."

OLD PLAY.

MR. RUBASORE, under a feigned name, repeated his visits, and really found much pleasure in fattening his protegés. He still passed for a physician, and acted with considerable delicacy in his intercourse both with father and daughter. His visits, and the daily procession of men in white jackets bearing eatables to the house, caused a sensation in the neighbourhood; and this, as a sensation always does, brought the object into notice. If M. Florentin ate more,

he shaved much more also; and his quiet, mild manners gained upon the esteem of those who lived about him, and he soon got plenty of customers, I was going to say—but I must, since I have proved that the barber's is a profession, call them clients.

Since Monsieur and Mademoiselle Florentin said so much about their gratitude to their benefactor, I shall say nothing. It must not be supposed that, as Rosalie recovered her health, she was able to conceal anything from Mr. Rubasore that, in reason, he might ask. He had some vague suspicions that made him most anxious to learn the whole history of the supposed spy; and, as in about a fortnight after his first meeting with this family, he thought it was high time to take some decisive step respecting his ward, he determined to have a long discourse with Ma'amselle Florentin, and, leaving them some money, to bid them farewell.

In his visits he had taken M. Florentin's advice, for which he first sought the shop,

respecting making the substitute of a false head of hair for his own natural grey locks and cherished queue. Most anxious to oblige him, M. Florentin had tried on Rubasore's pate all manner of brutuses, scratches, and hairy inventions, in all colours. But, as his parchment countenance seemed to be experimenting under which it could look the ugliest, the substitution was given up in despair, and the gentleman was forced to make up his mind to make love in his usual appearance, notwithstanding the expressed dislike of the lady to that very appearance, respectable and manly as he thought it.

It was the last afternoon that he intended staying in town: horses were ordered for the next morning early, for his departure for Jaspar Hall. He had made his adieus to the peruquier, who, almost beside himself with emotion, was inscribing his feelings of grief and gratitude upon the cheeks of an unhappy wretch, whom he was trying to shave in the shop. Seated near Rosalie, he requested her, in his most

insidious and blandest manner, to relate the whole story of this suspected person, assuring her that, when he knew all the facts, he had no doubt but that he should be able to set the Florentines right with the government, and thus get them included among the other pensioners who had, like them, been driven from revolutionary France.

Already had the flush of health begun, though faintly, to break through the paleness of her cheeks; already had some show of animation begun to pervade her conversation, and the involuntary quiverings of her upper lip had, with returning health, disappeared. Yet was she not the Rosalie Florentine of other days.

This, as she told the long tale of her's, and of her father's, sufferings, Mr. Rubasore knew not; he thought her beautiful, and she was so. In recounting all this, with which the adventures of the supposed spy were intimately connected, she thought to conceal her love for him. She

spoke of him coldly; and the brief and almost disparaging remarks that she made upon him were only as if she built a monument of cold stone over her buried happiness, thus making more apparent to all what she wished none to know.

But Mr. Rubasore cared but little about any heart that throbbed not for him; and, perhaps, if one could have been found that trusted him with its love, he would have withered it with unkindness, or broken it with cruelty. But he much cared for the tale that the poor girl was telling; and, when he had heard the whole of it, even he, in his long-practised duplicity, was scarcely able to repress the all-absorbing interest he took in it.

"Now, my dear Miss Rosalie, tell me only the name and the present retreat of this young hero?"

The young lady shuddered at this request. Certainly, she had nothing to fear from the charitable physician, yet she hesitated, and,

finally, said she could not. Mr. Rubasore became more urgent, and distressed her dreadfully by his entreaties.

At length she said: "I think that I have sworn not to divulge to any one those two very particulars, without the express permission of the individual himself. Father, father, step up here a moment!"

M. Florentine puffed himself up into the little room, all powder, politeness, and promptitude to oblige.

"Father," continued Rosalie, "have we not sworn never to divulge either *his* name or his place of refuge, both of which our good preserver is anxious of learning? Have we not sworn, father?"

"Ah! Bah! But he did not know Monsieur. He never could have meant to include him."

And thus the too easy Frenchman, taking Mr. Rubasore aside, whispered the important intelligence into his ears: the fatal words were divulged.

Mr. Rubasore had much difficulty to suppress the betrayal of his inordinate satisfaction. However, he assured them that now, without compromising the safety of the obnoxious individual, he would immediately get both father and daughter placed upon the eleemosynary list of the government; and then, amidst a shower of undeserved blessings, the traitor took his leave.

Mr. Rubasore had some influence with the government—indeed, more than was sufficient to enable him speedily and effectually to serve the Florentines. But had they—had Rosalie—known, that now the daily bread they were eating would, perhaps, soon be tainted by the life's-blood of one, for whom she would have joyfully laid down her life, that life would have been most joyfully sacrificed to recal their incautious act.

We must now, in imitation of Mr. Rubasore, leave these worthy people for the present, and proceed, by-and-by, to Jaspar Hall. But before we place ourselves, for the time, in so much good company as we shall find there, we must

shake ourselves clear of the bad, by merely stating that, through the instrumentality of Mr. Rubasore, his attorney, Mr. Sharpus, and two or three gentlemen wearing very antiquated wigs, Captain Oliver Oliphant was already pronounced to be in contempt of the awful Court of Chancery, and a warrant was out for committing that very gallant officer from one fleet to another, in which other the chances were greatly in his favour that he would not be drowned.

We will now suppose Mr. Underdown and Peter Drivel to be safely—and, considering all things, not uncomfortably—housed at the Plough, in the small hamlet in the neighbourhood of Jaspar Hall. Mr. Underdown had provided himself with an epistle from Captain Oliphant, which, if it had been submitted to the revision of Peter, would, as Peter himself punned it, have caused him to *hem!* until he had got a *stitch* in his side. Mr. Underdown thought that it would answer the purpose very well, though he only presumed at the contents,

and supposed that they might boast the proper allowance of nautical metaphor usually conspicuous in the young officer's phraseology.

The next forenoon, Peter Drivel, having sought in vain for pretty Nell, and sadly wanting occupation for his *vox*, returned to the inn, big with the intelligence that he had got no news, and half mad with his ineffectual attempts to make a pun upon the word steeple; however he consoled himself a little by saying that the subject was too *lofty* for him.

Then Mr. Underdown set out upon his delicate mission, provided with the above-mentioned nautical letter, Peter as his credentials—who, in his turn, was provided with the Universal Spelling-book—and the consciousness of honesty and rectitude of purpose.

Mr. Underdown ran a great chance of being entirely defeated by the simple occurrence of not being able to obtain an interview with Miss Belmont. Mrs. Dredgely received him, and, as discourteously as any one pretending to be a

gentlewoman could, told him that it was Rosa's wish, and her guardian's positive orders, that she should neither see nor be seen by strangers. As to delivering Captain Oliphant's letter to the young lady, the elderly one looked upon the proposal as a positive insult. "Good morning" was then very crossly wished, and, before Mr. Underdown could get delivered of any of his conciliatory speeches, he found himself, strangely enough as he thought, not only outside of the door, but of the gate of the front court also.

"Peter Drivel," said Mr. Underdown, between vexation and amusement, "Peter Drivel, we are fairly beaten."

"We may beat in our turn," said Peter, gathering himself up for a pun.

"How—whom—what?"

"A retreat."

"And I think that I ought to beat something in my turn—your back."

"Then my back would be beaten; and, as I

should have a beaten back—back beaten—beaten back—hack—whack back——"

"Well, out with it, Peter."

"Ah sir! it is an abortion. I thought I had caught an excellent pun by the tip of the wing, but it has taken itself off, sir; and I suppose we must do the same."

"I will not have travelled so many hundred miles only to be present at an attempt at a pun."

"People have travelled farther for a worse object. It was an attempt, I grant; but it is unkind, sir, of you to mention it. But it is wonderful how much I have to forgive in this way. Shall I go and order dinner, sir? Perhaps you would like to walk for an appetite; a fine shingle, sir, and the exercise of getting over it, is almost equal to the labour of——"

"Bringing forth a new good thing."

"Thank you, sir. I am glad to find you appreciate my merits at last. My own master, Captain Oliphant, never could, sir."

"Well, Peter, I will take your advice, and go down to the beach, for I perceive that I shall have, from thence, a very good view of the mansion, and those in the mansion may, if they like, have a very good view of me. But, Peter, you are my credentials. As a good ambassador, I shall leave them behind me—you had better walk round and round the house, and keep yourself as much in sight as you can. If Miss Belmont sees you, she will probably send for you, in order that she may learn news of your master; should this occur, say that I have a letter to her from him; if, on the other hand, she should not see you, and that red-faced woman, who acts as mistress here, should choose to have you put in the stocks as a vagabond and a trespasser, send for me—I shall be on the spot you have recommended me, and I will take care when I return in about an hour hence, to pass by these same stocks, and look into the cage, as I go to the Plough."

"Thank ye, sir, heartily, nothing could be more considerate. Put me in the stocks?—good. Don't go, sir, till I have done a little business in my way. Put me in the *stocks*, then there would be a *fund* of amusement—they would neither *rise* nor *fall* so much as the deposit, therefore I should be *bull* and *bear* myself, as I worked myself up and down. As Shakspeare says, we are not *stocks* and stones. *Stocks* — now that's very ungentlemanly, the man's out of hearing, and I have not half done yet. Mr. Underdown may be a very worthy gentleman, but he has no taste for wit. He is neither witty himself, nor the cause of wit in others, as honest old Jack hath it. Well, he has left me here as his credentials — the most creditable party in the affair, as I take it. Good, I'll walk round the house as he wished; but there is no use losing time. I'll refresh my memory." So worthy Peter opened his Dilworth, and began to read as he walked. "Acts, deeds—ax, a carpenter's tool

—hacks, doth hack;" but he had got no further than "beau, a fop—bo, a word of terror, than he ran right up against a broad, bony, brawny, Cornish countryman in livery.

"Bo,—is I a goose, mon—whoam may you be?"

"I am the credentials, rustic."

"Doam thy stick—call I a stick agin, and I'll break'un about thy crazy head, mon."

"Provincial, you are unurbane. I would speak with your mistress."

"Thee woant haa nothing to do with my missus, and missus says I be to get constable, and put thee in the cage like, if thee doesn't tramp—there!"

"Depart—I am studious."

Now the worshipful Peter was always the most pompous with those whom he conceived to be the most ignorant, therefore he glorified himself before the menial, who stared at him, and heard his language with unmeasured surprise, which surprise was not on the decrease when he saw him very composedly seat himself in full view

of the front windows of the house, and appear to be reading his book attentively.

"Then thee woant tramp?"

"No, discourteous trencher-scraper."

"Tell'ee these be own private premises—all as far as 'yond boundaries loines marked with stones."

"Pooh! the common earth man; here will I sit and meditate on words and things sublime."

"Then constable weel nob thee, mon—poor crazy body as he be."

Now this last remark of the retiring footman made Peter Drivel wroth; so he took up a stone, well adapted by its angularity to find its way into a thick skull, if thrown with sufficient force, and hurled it after the insulter with a very creditable degree of precision and impetus. It broke the man's uncovered head. First clapping his hand to the wound, to discover whether the little brains of which he could boast had oozed out, he turned round, and was immediately within arm's-length of the not unprepared Peter.

Without wasting time in any unnecessary preliminaries, issue was immediately joined in single combat, commonly called a fistic duel. I am not going to describe the rounds minutely. It was all round with the west-countryman—he hit round, he whirled round, and his two arms worked like the sails of a windmill going round, and these arms he wished to place round Peter, in order to give him the true Cornish hug. Peter declined it. However, as an indemnity for this uncomplying conduct, Peter delivered his one, two, twenty times over upon all parts of his antagonist's face, and whilst the burly fellow was shaking his head, and making his great eyes greater at these delicate touches, the face-painter got away. In a short time, the poor servant found his head and face almost twice their natural size, and this miracle was produced, too, by a dapper little fellow that he was sure he could have eaten if he could only have got at him.

But in thrashing this man, Peter Drivel did

his master the best possible service. This encounter soon drew out the other servants, and seeing a person so little, beating the bully of the servant's hall, they gave up, for once, the *esprit de corps* of the shoulder-knot, and clamorously preserved fair play. This clamour brought out the female domesticity, a bad word, but let it go, for, if I try to mend it, I may make the matter worse, as they did; for the fray, that was only clamorous before, became obstreperous, which I take to be the meaning that Nelly wished to convey, when she rushed into Miss Belmont's private apartment, and, with the outspread fingers of both her hands above her head, exclaimed, that "little Peter, Captain Oliphant's man, was obstropulously beating Heavy Hal, the second footman."

We need not be diffuse on the emotions that this simple intelligence created in the bosom of our romantic lady, who had been hitherto kept profoundly ignorant of Mr. Underdown's attempt at an interview. Acting upon impulse,

as every romantic person is bound to do, she followed Nelly to the scene of action, whither also Mrs. Dredegely had repaired, her face more inflamed than that of the sun, trying to work his way through a London fog. She was upon the point of ordering Peter to the cage, without hearing anything on his behalf, when Miss Belmont interposed, or rather moved an amendment, that for the word cage, should be read "her private sitting-room," which amendment was carried by a very large majority.

However, Peter was a man who wished to bear himself as befitted a man who was the "credentials" of his master, so begged leave, in the first place, to "wash his hands of his late opponent," and they really wanted it, for there was much of his blood upon them.

Borne in graceful triumph between Nelly and the cook, he made his triumphal entry into the kitchen, and eager were the services of all in assisting him at his ablutions. But even under the operation of the pump, Peter ran the risk

of suffocation in the painful endeavour to deliver himself of a pun. But, as the maids threw cold water upon the attempt, we will suppose it to be so bad a one, that it was drowned, like an ugly puppy, with seven other pups uglier than he.

Refreshed, and with re-adjusted apparel, Mr. Drivel was ushered into the romantic presence. He had much difficulty in making his way across the room. The impediments were classical as they were numerous, among the most conspicuous of which were two altars, only imagined by Pope, of "twelve French romances finely gilt." Guitars, harps, and harpsichords, drawing-boards, and easels, an apparatus for staining paper, globes, portfolios, and skipping-ropes, formed a very imposing confusion. The lady had just completed a very excellent *general* likeness, in water-colours, of the Belladonna, as she lay at anchor, which was the article which finally arrested the attention, and excited the astonishment, of the much perceptive Peter.

That astonishment, however, he was just then too polite to express.

"Well, Peter," said Miss Rosa Belmont, with her colour a little more brilliant than the heat of the day might warrant, "I hope my ill-bred servant has not much hurt you, when he beat you just now?"

"Beat me, miss. If you think that lolloping chap beat me,—if you, miss, think so,—then indeed I am much hurt. I wish, madam, you would condescend to order him here, and ask him how he likes beating me. Beat me! That beats cockfighting—and I the credentials, too!"

"The what, good Peter?" for the lady wished to be soothing, seeing that he was offended at something, but still thinking that so little a man must have been well thrashed by one so large.

"The credentials, ma'am," said he, quite stiffly, "Captain Oliphant, ma'am, has something very important to communicate to you, ma'am; and, as he cannot leave the ship, he has

sent me ashore with a gentleman, Mr. Underdown, whom the red-faced gentlewoman gently turned out of the house this morning, ma'am, that gentleman has a letter, ma'am—but I was sent to prove to you that the thing is no hoax—beat me—"

"Indeed, Peter, I am very sorry for it. The cowardly fellow, to take so mean an advantage of his superior strength and size. I'll dismiss him to-morrow—there's a couple of guineas, Peter, to make you some amends for the punishment that the brutish man has inflicted upon you."

Peter took the money irreverently enough, and first tossed up one piece, and then another, from his thumb-nail. Seven times were they so tossed, whilst his mind was still more violently tossed in the troubled sea of doubt, whether he should retain the money given him under an apprehension so insulting to his manliness. At length, his doubts and the money were both quietly disposed of, and he made a low bow,

drily observing, "that he should like to be so beaten daily for the same remuneration."

The young lady had just rung the bell, in order to send a servant to Mr. Underdown, to request that he would honour her with a call, when in plunged Mrs. Dredgely, with real alarm, and a great deal of anger depicted on her countenance, a countenance that was excellently adapted to the expression of such emotions.

"O, Miss Rosa, here's murder committed in this very house—and there stands the villain before you. Henry has gone off insensible, and we can't bring him to; his head is as big as a cider-barrel. The doctor will be here directly. I'm sure the man will die, if he is not dead already,—we must secure that savage murderer. O, Miss Rosa, and you talking to him so quietly like. You are our prisoner, in the king's name, you savage ruffian, you."

"Pray don't be alarmed, ma'am; my late antagonist is only sulking; a wet swab will

bring him to. It is only a judgment upon him for beating me so unmercifully."

"Beat you—why, you've killed the man!"

"The man may die, or the man may leave it alone. I have two good golden reasons for knowing that he beat me this morning most unmercifully."

By this time, Miss Belmont became seriously alarmed, and they went immediately into the entrance hall, where they found Heavy Hal lying on the marble floor in a state of real or assumed insensibility. Already had his hands been slapped, and feathers and rags been burned under his nose. Those about him were in a state of perplexity and alarm, when Mr. Underdown made his appearance. This gentleman always carried a case of surgical instruments with him. Having dispersed the crowd from about the man, he bled him, and soon gave him the full use of the moderate quantity of sense which nature had permitted to him. When his eyes were as

much opened as the swelling about them would permit, he shook his head ruefully at Peter Drivel, and looking round at the merriment expressed on most of the countenances, he prepared to shamble off in silence.

"You had better lead him to his bed-room, Thomas, and bind up his swelled head."

"A shan't, Madam Dredgely—I says a shan't. I'll go whoam to mother. Ye may send my wages arter me. I turns ye off, and Miss Rosa too, as my missusses. I'll go whoam to mother."

And home to mother the beaten bully went, to the great satisfaction of everybody.

CHAPTER III.

"When art meets art then comes the tug of war."

Now, at this time, there was a sort of armed neutrality between Mrs. Dredgely and the young lady under her charge. Each was on the guard against the other. The elder was fearful of carrying restriction upon the younger to the verge of offence, the younger not desirous of provoking the elder to the display of open enmity. Indeed, considering the short duration of her empire and her future prospects, Mrs. Dredgely was much at a loss whom of the two she should conciliate, the guardian or his ward.

The re-appearance of Mr. Underdown brought the matter to a crisis.

'After Miss Belmont had thanked him, in her sweetest tones, for his assistance in recovering her departed servant, she begged that he would do her the honour of walking in, and partaking some refreshment. During this speech, Mrs. Dredgely smiled, and frowned, and fidgetted, but made no objection.

Mr. Underdown, wishing to do all things in the least offensive manner, and thus to do them the more completely, bowed very respectfully, first to Rosa, and then to her chaperone.

"I thank you sincerely for your hospitable kindness," said he to the former; to the latter, "Have I, madam, your permission?"

"Why, sir," Mrs. Dredgely replied, "I am placed in a peculiar situation—that I am. A poor lone widow, though of the best family in the county, I assure you—of sound religious principles, too, sir—what am I to do? If I offend Mr. Rubasore—his own relation though

I be—he will turn me out to starve upon my poor one hundred and fifty pounds a-year; and I wouldn't, for millions and millions of worlds, anger that dear delightful angel, whom I love better than my whole life. What shall I do—what shall I do?" And here there was displayed some of the best imitative sobbing and one of the whitest cambric handkerchiefs possible.

"We request you to do nothing, my dear good lady," said Underdown in his most insinuating voice, "nothing but what will be most conducive to your own interests. Really, Mr. Rubasore has not used you well. I will explain this to you fully: however, I will gladly avail myself, in the meantime, of your invitation to take luncheon; I am really hungry."

At this repast, Mr. Underdown did everything that could re-assure Mrs. Dredgely, who confessed that she had received a great *consideration*, provided that, without encountering the opposition of Miss Belmont, she kept that lady from the sight of all visiters until he

arrived. This avowal Mr. Underdown had, with great art, gradually drawn from her: and, when thus elicited, was the cause of a most excellent burst of indignation from the romantic Rosa. Every adjective, the least synonimous to the word "perfidious," came into energetic play; and the scene, as the contriver of it intended, concluded in Mrs. Dredgely almost flinging herself on her knees before Rosa, askings of pardon, relentings, embraces, kisses, and, ultimately, vows of eternal friendship.

Having thus fully committed the *gouvernante*, Mr. Underdown next proceeded to explain to the ladies the law and the privilege that Miss Belmont had of choosing other guardians. He then delivered Captain Oliphant's letter, and thus opened to the eyes of Rosa a most delightful, a most blissful prospect. It was then that Mr. Underdown fully observed the romantic ardour of her disposition. The vivid eloquence of her expressions fairly astonished him, to whom astonishment was so unfamiliar.

Yet Mrs. Dredgely did not fully participate in this burst of bliss. When she heard the plan of Rosa being removed to Trestletree Hall, the grandeur of the place commented upon, the largeness of the establishment and the amiability of its inmates, and more especially the great command that they had of the most fashionable society,—and, during all this, when she found no mention made of her own name as an integral part of all these desirabilities, her cambric handkerchief was again at her eyes, and "Oh! what will become of me?" once more doled forth.

Rosa was too deeply absorbed in her sweet reveries to pay much attention to these complainings; but as Mr. Underdown had not, by a great deal, so much heart as Miss Belmont, who, as she said herself, was "all heart," so he had some little sense of Mrs. Dredgely's sorrow, and thus undertook the part of consoler:—

"Do not, my dear madam, give way to these doleful presentiments. Had you no other

trust than the gratitude of the Bacuissart family, you would, believe me, have reason to think yourself fortunate. That Miss Belmont will marry Captain Oliphant may almost be pronounced to be a certainty. Reflect if, by any miracle, Mr. Rubasore should possess himself of the hand of his ward, how small would be your chance of hereafter becoming his wife."

"I Mr. Rubasore's wife!"

"Surely. He only overlooks your great merits in the presence of a person a little, very little, younger, though a great deal richer."

"Ah, she is a great deal richer, certainly."

"You have stated the exact point upon which the question turns. As to personal appearance, there are many, I assure you, madam, who would prefer yours to that of Miss Belmont. I should be a gross flatterer if I said all men would. Mr. Rubasore must be well assured, in his own mind, that you are better fitted to be his companion, his bosom

friend, his wife, than a flighty young lady, who has been most elaborately, yet most preposterously, educated."

"Mr. Rubasore will never think so," said the lady, with a sincere sigh.

"He will, madam, when we give him the leisure and the opportunity."

"Hush, my dear sir! Miss Belmont will hear you."

"Fear it not. Observe her: she has just now eyes and ears only for what she undoubtedly calls inspiration. I know the indubitable signs of the disease. She is making verses. I ask you, madam, is that Sappho-like countenance, half glory, half madness, fit for that of the wife of so grave and so sarcastic a man as Mr. Rubasore?"

"Certainly not; though I honestly confess I wish that countenance, with all its faults, were mine."

"I admire the honesty of that wish. We shall soon understand each other. We must all set off for town to-morrow morning."

"Stop, sir, if you please. How is my appearing to join in a conspiracy against Mr. Rubasore to terminate in my marrying him?—that is to say, if I choose to accept him—for I have not yet made up my mind whether I would marry him after all."

After that remark, Mr. Underdown knew that it was all arranged in her own mind to the utmost of his wishes.

"Miss Belmont, may I disturb you for a moment?"

"I am all attention." She then continued, in a lower tone, murmuring, unconscious of the presence of any one—

"And spring's feather'd choristers shall chant
The name, the name of—of—"

"Oliver Oliphant," said Mr. Underdown, kindly helping her out with the couplet. "Yes, Miss Belmont, you are determined to repair to town with me to-morrow, and take the legal steps in order to choose new guardians."

"Fully determined."

"And you will resist any force that may be employed to prevent you."

"I will, to the last breath of my life."

"You hear that, Mrs. Dredgely. And ought you not, as Miss Belmont's friend and custodian, and to prevent scandal, to accompany her?"

"I think I ought."

"And as the friend of Mr. Rubasore, seeing that you cannot prevent this extreme step, as his friend, I say, and as one jealous of his interests, ought you not to accompany us to watch these extreme proceedings?"

"I am sure I ought," said the lady, quite satisfied.

"Well, write to Mr. Rubasore immediately, and as indignantly as you like. We do nothing clandestinely, madam. Let her guardian meet us before the Lord Chancellor, if he dare."

"I can hear nothing against Mr. Rubasore," said Mrs. Dredgely, excessively pleased. "No-

thing, sir—without you have anything more to add."

"Well, madam, you will best serve his interests by accompanying his ward to town."

"I shall do so, sir; and state to that honourable gentleman the whole progress of these outrageous proceedings, and my just indignation at them. Mind, sir, I shall do this with no reference to our silly conversation respecting any matrimonial engagement with Mr. Rubasore, whom, I dare say, I should refuse, should he offer himself. I think, sir, we shall defy your machinations."

"The sooner, madam, the issue is tried the better."

"My displeasure at your conduct, sir, is sufficiently great, without having it increased by unpleasant reflections."

"Madam, my displeasure equals your own."

Just then, never were two people mutually more pleased with each other.

Notwithstanding the avowed hostility of the

two parties, Mr. Underdown spent the rest of the day most happily at Jaspar Hall. Peter was the hero of the kitchen, and was gratified by almost as much unsophisticated astonishment as satisfied even his vanity.

Early the next morning, Mrs. Dredgely having, before the establishment, with the best-humoured and mildest countenance she had been seen to wear for many weeks, verbally protested against the proceedings, resigned the keys to the housekeeper, she then stepped in the post-chaise with Miss Belmont and Nelly. Four horses whirled them along towards London, the inmates being in the most amicable state of opposition conceivable, and each, now they were openly quarrelling, loving each other a little for the first time in their lives. Mr. Underdown followed in another chaise, in which he had granted a seat to Peter Drivel, having first of all found that his intolerable but very convenient headache would preclude all manner of conversation.

Peter, thus reduced to involuntary silence, was the only miserable person of the party.

Arrived in London, Mr. Underdown lost no time in addressing the Lord Chancellor. The case was heard in his private room. Miss Belmont had an interview with the learned lord; Rubasore's letters were produced, and his lordship was not slow in coming to a conclusion that Mr. Rubasore had most shamefully abused his trust for the most selfish purposes. His guardianship was taken from him, those whom Miss Belmont preferred appointed, a handsome sum set aside for her use during the few months of her minority, and, unkindest cut of all, Mr. Rubasore was adjudged to pay the whole expense of the application.

The proceedings, of course, were staid against Captain Oliphant; and the expenses of this, also, fell where they ought—upon the unjust guardian.

Mr. Sharpus, Rubasore's attorney, who narrowly escaped being struck off the rolls, did his

best to hush up the whole matter, acting on the part of his client entirely without his knowledge, for that client, just then, could nowhere be found.

He was far away, meanly seeking fuel for anticipated revenge on the Bacuissart family, on the clue that he had gained from M. Florentin. He had not the remotest idea of the energetic measures that were all this time so successfully pursued against him.

Mrs. Dredgely acted her part well. She had written duplicates to Mr. Sharpus and Mr. Rubasore; and, immediately on her arrival in town, hastened to the office of the latter, and made great merit and great lamentation at these proceedings. Sharpus was himself deceived, praised her greatly, and, since the money was not his own, paid her well. She returned to Jaspar Hall, there, for a short time, to reign sole mistress, and mature her plans in order to accomplish her design upon the hand of her rich relation.

CHAPTER IV.

" 'Tis on the eve of battle that the mind
Deals in deep magic, conjuring up all things
Of sweet and bitter flavour, and contrasts
In dreadful disarray the crown of glory
With the cold tomb."

OLD PLAY.

MY tale is drawing to acrisis. I am agitated From many points events are converging as to one common centre, and, in bringing forward masses, I shall have but too little opportunity to expatiate upon details. I am unartful in my method: I fear me my labour will all have been thrown away, and my climax will explode in the wrong place. O that I could assemble together every reader that I may have! how humbly would I pass on before them, with my hat bound

with tarnished lace in my hand, and the wind playing with my few silvery locks, and beg of each his or her pardon for having thus attempted what one only who is well versed in the ways of the pen could have brought to a successful issue. But, alas! this may not be. I find that now, in my eleventh hour, pause I cannot; yet, so multiplied have my dilemmas grown around me, that I know not how to proceed. But hark! methinks I hear the far-off sound of the right royal sea artillery. Again my blood pulsates healthily, my bosom grows warm, the fibres of my heart firm; it is the distant memory of the din of battle, when men fought, and suffered, and died, in the strange delirium of strife that seems so much like joy while it lasts, that we sacrifice all joys to share in it. Hark! 'tis the booming of the double-shotted guns over the silent waters. Now I hesitate no more; I know where I ought to be—it is with the gallant old Commodore.

Already did every man on board the Thun-

derbolt bear a strange kind of love to the battered old hero. He seemed to govern them, and all his squadron, less by severity than a never-ceasing vigilance. No fault that was committed was overlooked, yet few offences were punished, and none, according to the notions of the time, adequately. A silent but rapid reformation was working upon the crew; a spirit of honour began to rise among them, and each man commenced exchanging his recklessness for a new-born self-respect.

Sir Octavius had been nearly one month on board; and, as yet, no back had been bared to the severe torture of the ignominious lash. The boatswain's cane, merely from habit, was sometimes used; but so sure was the feeling that even that comparatively trifling personal chastisement would be displeasing to the Commodore, that no blow was ever struck in his sight.

But had the crew of the Thunderbolt suddenly—and, if suddenly, miraculously—become immaculate? Oh no, far from it! Drunkenness

still took place; and, perhaps, some ten of the very worst among them became still worse. But these very black, and almost unpunished, sheep, became as pariahs among the rest—objects of contempt and of disgust. Now, no severity of punishment created for these rascals a sympathy with their fellow-seamen, or an importance as objects to be commiserated.

The good men could now say, and often did say, to those who felt inclined to skulk their duty, even for a moment, "Now don't be like that snivelling fellow, Sneakaway Jack." The men began to avoid crime, no longer because they knew that they would be punished for it, but because it was shabby. Having once felt all the pride of this sentiment—and the feeling was a new-born species of happiness to them—they had already made a great advance towards moral perfection.

Perhaps, the person of all on board the Thunderbolt, who found it the most difficult to reform himself, was the Commodore, who was

thus rapidly reforming all the rest. Ever and anon, a broken oath would fall abortively to the ground. Often the flushed brow, and the gyrated hook and spike would betray the contention within. None appreciated, none even knew the agonised struggle that would, at times, take place in that manly bosom, between the wildest passion and a deep sense of duty and remorse. "Lead me not into temptation!" was the most important clause of his daily prayer.

Very different, indeed, was the scene on the quarter-deck of the Thunderbolt to that which was usual on board of the Terrific. Formerly, when Sir Octavius appeared on deck, he created, comparatively speaking, a solitude. Then, none dared cross the lion in his walks, but those whom duty positively commanded to stay. The men shrank from before him, and every ear had that painful sensation of suspense that accompanies the expectation of thunder, dreading lest the terrors of his harsh and powerful voice should suddenly burst upon it. Then, when

his cocked-hat emerged from under the poop, many a startled eye regarded with fear the signs upon his countenance; the lieutenant of the watch looked anxiously at the trimming of the sails, the middies grew pale if a stray ropeyarn was visible upon the deck, the quarter-master was emphatic with his "Luff, luff you may, luff," and the men at the wheel were nervously apprehensive of a cuff from his terrible iron hand.

But now, how very different was the effect of his appearance. Cheerful, but most respectful looks met him at every turn. The happy news that he was on deck spread rapidly down to the ward-room and cockpit, and lieutenants and midshipmen flocked up to catch and to return the kind greeting of his single eye. The quarter-master at the cunn looked up proudly and confidently, the attentive steersman expected, with a grateful glow, the usual word of approbation, and every face he saw, reflected back to him the peace and happiness of his own heart.

Then, if he expressed a wish, how eagerly was every ear and eye strained to catch its import, how zealous and how swift the alacrity that was displayed in its execution! There was rivalry who should perform it. And honest Jack, if he could but find any pretence to pass near his venerated commander, and could but catch his eye or receive a friendly nod, happy, thrice happy, was he for that livelong day. But, perhaps, the most beautiful, the most touching sight of all, was to see some blooming and beautiful boy, bridling up with silent rapture, his face all flame and his bosom all emotion, receiving the commendation of the veteran before his brother-officers and his messmates.

The tear would start to the eye of the youth, and stand there suspended with heroic fortitude; but when the hero would cease speaking, the happy child would go down sometimes to the solitude of his dark berth, and, hiding his head upon the table, give vent to his happiness in

gushes of tears, and wonder why he wept. This has been often observed. O ye captains of men-of-war!—Never mind—just now, I will not apostrophise you.

I need only tell a very ludicrous anecdote, which will prove, more than twenty pages of well-written asseveration, the high veneration in which the old Commodore stood, fore and aft. There is always some one particular man before the mast, some would-be Stanfield, who fancies himself, and is fancied by the rest of the ship's company, to have a prodigious talent for drawing. This self-taught artist is always a rough, good sailor, and he will design you his ship, in violation of every rule of colouring, perspective, and drawing, yet put every rope and block accurately, almost always having a curled green wig for a sea. Now the *artiste* of the Thunderbolt was as honest a Jack tar as ever grumbled over flinty biscuit, and was as skilful with the marlingspike as he was with the pencil; indeed, if we must tell the

honest truth, a great deal more so. If he had not been able to mouse the mainstay, or turn in a dead-eye, better than he could turn out a portrait of a man-of-war; some people, landsmen of course, would have said that he ought to have been keel-hauled for a lubber. However, this Tim Tint had a failing in common with Cardinal Richelieu,—you could not flatter the cardinal by praising him as a statesman; in which character he was all but perfect, whilst he would greedily devour every fulsome sycophancy offered to him as a poet, about his excellence as such he had *some* doubts—the world *none* whatever.

Thus Tim Tint grew impatient when he was told he was a thorough sailor, and turned away uninterested; but tell him he was a great painter, and you won his heart for ever. Now, a wicked wight of a midshipman had, one day, merely in the spirit of frolicsome annoyance, disparaged his pictorial powers.

"Please your honour," said the offended Timothy, "I can paint anything."

"You can't paint an angel."

The defiance was received with a proud confidence, and thereupon issue was joined.

Oh the wearying Sysiphean task that Timothy undertook when he set about angel-painting! All manner of monsters with wings, and "chimera dread," did Tim produce; but not even the magnitude of his own self-love, would permit him to pronounceone of them an angel. At length, after labour infinite, something like a bolster in a bed-gown, with a sufficient pair of wings and hands, and feet corresponding, made its appearance— but the head, the face,—"Aye, there's the rub," and a rub it was indeed, for fifty times was it rubbed in, and as often rubbed out again.

Timothy Tint was at the last gasp of despair. Of the nine immaculate ladies from the Point of Portsmouth, who were allowed on board, he had endeavoured to copy the faces with a perseverance that would have been noble in any cause—glorious in his angelic one. He suc-

ceeded best with brandy-faced Nan, as he could not, by any possibility, over-charge the countenance with colour. But it would not do.

Timothy began to fret upon it, indeed, to grow seriously ill. All day long, when he was not drawing, he had to answer the tenderest and most affectionate inquiries after his angel; and whilst he was drawing it on his sea chest, with a Point lady before him, he had so many *sea cognoscenti* around him, twisting their faces, and lolling out their tongues with the motions of his pencil, overwhelming him all the time, with so much impossible-to-be-followed, and therefore most excellent, advice, that he was nearly driven mad.

"What shall I do for a head—what shall I do for a head?" was Timothy Tint's tribulation, and constant moan.

"Ship on Sir Hoctivy's," (meaning the old Commodore's,) said one of the gunner's crew. "If so be there's an angel of a man afloat, it is Sir Hoctivy Bacckeysquirt."

To this sentiment every one responded heartily. No sooner said than done. The bald head, the stiff and clubbed pigtail, the scarred skull, and the black patch upon the eye, were much more easily imitated than the beauties of any of the nine muses from Point. Without their assistance, Tim's point was gained. The likeness was apparent; the midshipman vowed he had succeeded; and Tim might have made a small fortune in manufacturing the Commodore of angels. Instead of a branch of palm, he always placed in the angelic right hand, a staff, from which floated out a commodore's broad pennant. Sometimes these portraits were called "Commodores of Angels," sometimes "Angels of Commodores." Sir Octavius purchased one for five guineas, and, to this day, it hangs up, splendidly framed and glazed, in the best dining-room at Trestletree Hall.

At last, Captain Oliphant of the Belladonna, telegraphed that the enemy's squadron was in sight. This was just at the going down of the

sun. The Commodore having ascertained the course that they were steering, altered that of his own squadron, so as to intercept them. Not wishing to encounter them in the night, he did not clap on a press of sail. Having made his little fleet close with him, he signalled on board the Thunderbolt each of its captains. They repaired with him into his cabin, and there he clearly pointed to them to what manœuvres he should have recourse under almost every possible contingency. He then gave them their instructions; and having filled them with admiration at his sagacity and great nautical experience, he bade them all kindly adieu, inviting them to dine with him, to meet the French admiral the next day at six, post meridian.

They all promised to do their best in one engagement, in order that they might punctually keep the other; and then, with mutual expressions of kindness and esteem, they departed, each to his own ship, to see that she was complete in every particular for the dreadful work of the next day.

During the short night, the two squadrons gradually approached each other. In the solitude of his cabin, Sir Octavius experienced a serenity of soul so nearly approaching to happiness, that he was surprised at his own feelings. He much wished that his nephew, Captain Oliphant, had been with him; but this, the nature of the service would not permit, for his frigate, with an eighteen-gun brig, were on the imporportant duty of watching the motions of the enemy.

Trusting in all things so fully to his friend Underdown, the Commodore had but few domestic arrangements to make, in the event that the day went not well with him. He wrote a pathetic letter to his sister Lady Astell, imploring her forgiveness, and beseeching her to receive his blessing, and remember him only as a loving brother. About ten o'clock, he supped cheerfully with Captain Egerton, and when that gentleman had retired, he received orders that both men and officers should take all the rest,

consistent with the duty of the ship, and that the trimming of the sails should be done with as few hands as possible. A crowd of officers and young gentlemen, who were gathered on the poop, looking out anxiously for the French with their night-glasses, were fairly driven to bed, grumbling like so many chidden school-boys.

Before Sir Octavius turned into his cot, about an hour from midnight, he went to walk in his stern-gallery; and, as good men sometimes, but so seldom do, to commune with his own soul. He could not well understand the peace that fell upon him, but, like most sailors, being a little superstitious, he fancied that it was an omen that the next day would terminate his mortal existence. Hitherto, on the eve of battle, he had felt a savage joy—a thirsting for slaughter—a ferocious transport in the anticipation of hurling the bolts of destruction upon the foe. He now viewed it more as a sorrowful but necessary contention of skill with the enemy.

His ear was no longer greedy, his soul no more athirst for the agonized cry of the wounded, or the convulsive groan of the dying. The wind-quelling broadside, the hissing of the irresistible and heavy shot, and the crashing of the mighty timbers, as they yawned to the rending iron, the anticipation of all which, that formerly filled his breast with a grim rapture, had now, for him, no charms. He felt himself an altered man, and rejoiced in the alteration.

Slowly and contemplatively he paced his stern-walk. The moon rode high in the heavens, and cast over the rippling waters one bright and broad beam, that reached from one point of the horizon to the opposite. Extending in a line, moved on majestically the floating and winged towers that obeyed his command; his— a poor, infirm, old, and almost worn-out man. The Commodore found something sublime in the idea of his physical weakness. He willed: and those vast machines, with their thousands of men—in every corporeal point his superiors

—obeyed him with zeal, alacrity, and confidence. But this thought added not, that night, to his vanity.

Far off, on the Thunderbolt's weather-beam, in the midst of the moon's broad ray, distinct, of a glaring white, and very lovely to look upon, was the frigate of his nephew, Captain Oliphant; and an eighteen-gun brig following in her wake, like a white-vested page attending the walk of a queen. These vessels were much nearer the enemy than to the ships of their own squadron.

The French themselves were distinctly seen under easy sail, keeping their wind, appearing like a long line of dark but small shadows on the line of the horizon, each ship, as it passed under the moon, suddenly putting on a robe of white glory, and then again passing, as it were, into a mere shadow. It was a subject worthy the realising pencil of Stanfield, that prince among painters.

It was a grand and beautiful scene on this

peaceful, and, to the Commodore, noiseless summer's night. Sir Octavius had a sailor's usual share of superstition; and this was just the kind of time and place in which the ideal is so prone to lord it over the mind. It is in an hour like this, that the soul seems to laugh at the usual divisions of time, and has the power of concentrating all the acted events of years into the grasp of a moment. Sir Octavius ran rapidly over the incidents of his life, until he came to the act that had flung his much-loved nephew upon the engulfing waters. Then came a darkness over him; the moon's light seemed no longer glorious; wan and sickly appeared to him her ray, as it wantoned with the tiny waves. All else grew suddenly upon him, funereal and visionary. He stood motionless in the centre of his walk, and then, smiting his breast, exclaimed, "Is the murder of that boy recorded against me? May God forgive me!"

With a strange feeling, he looked over and

down upon the eddying waters that bubbled about the rudder-head and chains, as if again expecting to see him; though this was in a different ship, and in a far different scene.

The old man looked down for a space, and then turned away shuddering. His heart then yearned for communion with the youth's spirit. Had he seen it walking to him over the waters, he would have welcomed it with gladness. He even, perhaps impiously, prayed to see it.

He next bethought him of sending for his chaplain; for, with shame be it spoken, he hardly knew how to form his thoughts into prayer, beyond the touching appeal of the Publican, "Lord, be merciful to me a sinner!" But, as yet, Sir Octavius knew but little of the character of that reverend gentleman, and thus he shrank from unburthening to him his private griefs. Pity it is that the Commodore did not know that the whole of his thoughts were prayers, and every resolution that he made that evening an acceptable incense at the throne

of mercy; every one, perhaps, but the last, which, however, seemed to give him a mighty consolation.

"If this murder is to be laid at my door," said he, half aloud, "may God be merciful to me, a miserable sinner! I will make what amends I can. To-morrow, when we board the French admiral, the first man I cut down, I will do it in the name of poor Augustus."

Then, recommending his daughter to the protection of Heaven, and uttering a short ejaculation for the recovery of his sister, whom he always deemed mad, he lay down in his cot, with his clothes on, and slept till early dawn, as peacefully as does the midsummer's sun upon a bank of daisies.

CHAPTER V.

"In the fierce transport of the raging fight
Still keep, O keep humanity in sight;
Think that for men ye slay, but every deed
Ye do of mercy, shall for mercy plead,
When men shall judge no more."

OLD POEM.

WHEN the day had fully broken, it was found that, during the night, the two squadrons had approached each other considerably. The Belladonna and the brig were actually within gun-shot of the enemy. Both squadrons were standing on the same tack, the French about eight miles to windward of the English, generally under double reefed topsails, top-gallant sails and fore-courses. Thus it was at their option to begin the action whenever they

chose. Sir Octavius, in order to close with them, made signal for his ships to shake out all reefs and make all sail. The French admiral appeared to take no notice whatever of this demonstration, but continued his course with easy dignity. The wind was moderate, the sky was cloudless; and everything seemed to promise a long day of manœuvering, before the contest would be decided.

Affairs remained in this state until about seven in the morning; Sir Octavius's squadron, notwithstanding the press of sail that it carried, gaining but little upon that of the French, who probably, being to windward, had the best of the breeze, or perhaps their ships were faster sailers. But, about seven, there was some amusement to relieve the anxiety of this long suspense. The proximity of the frigate and brig seemed, at last, to give offence to the enemy; and the line-of-battle ship that was abreast of the Belladonna fired a half-dozen or so precautionary shot at her, as much as to say to

her, very civilly, "I beg, madam, that you will keep at a more respectful distance." Though this hint was not conveyed in a whisper, the saucy Belladonna did not choose to understand it; upon which there was a little shaking out of bunting on board the French admiral, when the two large frigates that accompanied him bore up, and closed rapidly with the English frigate and brig. Captain Oliphant waited for them very quietly; and when the first had approached him within musket-shot, he administered his whole broadside, and the enemy's topmasts were over her side in a moment. However, she was not so much disabled as not to be in a state to haul her wind, and deliver, on her part, a very prettily executed broadside, which made a few of the Belladonna's spars fly, and some of her rigging dangle awkwardly about. In the mean while, the second French frigate was approaching fast; and the old Commodore, seeing that the odds were too great against his nephew, and

that there was no chance of the French line-of-battle ships running down to interfere, and thus bring on a general action, he signalled to the Belladonna and brig to run to leeward of his own line.

The dismasted French frigate was now taken in tow by her consort; but, in this state, they were unable to regain their proper situation, and Sir Octavius saw that when he had forged sufficiently a-head of the enemy to tack, if he still continued to refuse the engagement, one, or perhaps both, of the frigates must evidently be cut off. This little affair was a sort of snack before breakfast, which was relished extremely by all the English.

At eight o'clock, the English piped to breakfast, and I believe there were not ten men in the squadron who did not enjoy the meal, and eat it more cheerfully than usual, though it was to be, to so many, their last. The squadron had been in fighting order all night; however, after breakfast, the old Commodore beat to

quarters, and, accompanied by Captain Egerton and the first lieutenant, visited every part of the ship, not excepting the powder rooms, the wings, and the hospital in the cock-pit. They found everything in the best of order.

It is not in my province to give a detailed and official account of the action that took place on the 15th of July. It is chronicled in the naval history of the country. The reader, I know, will not require it; partly because those who have written such chronicles knew but little of the matter, and partly because I have confounded dates. I shall narrate only so much of the particulars of this engagement as bear upon the individual character of my hero, and state, generally, its results.

If people be not satisfied with this, there is James's Naval History, edited by the gallant and erudite Captain Chamier, to which any one may refer, both with pleasure and advantage. Let, therefore, the dissatisfied pick out the most gallant and heart-stirring battle in the work,

and reading it, conceive that, heart-stirring and gallant as it may be, the action fought on this day by Sir Octavius Bacuissart, was not less gallant and heart-stirring.

Let us return to the old Commodore, who has just returned to the quarter-deck from his orlopian perambulations.

I have before mentioned that he had made his previous arrangements with the captains of his ships as to the line of conduct that they were to pursue under almost any emergency; thus he avoided the necessity of perplexing his little fleet amidst the hurry of action with multiplied and too often embarrassing signals. He therefore had now principally to look at the conduct of his own vessel.

Having no one to contradict me, I might, if I chose, magnify the French forces as two to one against the English. But a glory so easily attained, I, in the name of the old Commodore, despise and renounce. Indeed, had Sir Octavius engaged with the French off Cherbourg, in

his former disastrous cruise, then there would have been the odds against him of seven sail-of-the-line to five; but this disproportion would have been more apparent than real; for then the enemy had been away from their own harbours nearly two years; had had their crews weakened by sickness, and partly dispersed in prizes, whilst they were miserably found in stores. The squadron with which Sir Octavius had now to contend was, in number, equal to his own, each consisting of five sail-of-the-line, and two smaller vessels. The disproportion now was, that one of the enemy's ships, the admiral, for by an admiral this squadron was commanded, was a three-decker of the largest class, La Magnifique, and both the French frigates were superior in size, number of guns, and calibre, to the Belladonna, and the English eighteen-gun brig in an action of this sort may be almost reckoned as nothing.

About nine A.M., after exchanging a few jocular remarks with Captain Egerton, Sir Oc-

tavius gets him upon the hammocks stowed on the poop, sends to his cabin for his best glass, and then takes a deliberate survey of the enemy, ship by ship. The examination seemed to him highly satisfactory. It must be confessed that they loomed well. The first-rate in the centre of the line showed her three rows of teeth in a truly grim and formidable manner, and seemed to hunger for something huge. Their tricolored ensigns floated out gracefully from their gaff ends, and all looked among them like regularity, order, and determination. In fact, they were all fancy vessels, equipped with the greatest care, and manned with the *élite* of the navy, for the French directory felt the necessity of, if possible, interrupting the long and unbroken chain of victories that had hitherto attended the British navy, and thus do away with the great moral ascendency that we had over them. They could not have chosen a better man to effect this than admiral and citizen Frèsnoy; there was only one misfortune that

endangered all these excellent arrangements, and that was a terrible one—the fighting old Commodore was opposed to him.

The French squadron still kept their wind under the same sail, and at 9—30 A.M. the headmost ship was nearly a-beam of the Thunderbolt. Sir Octavius, leaving the poop, said to his captain, "I intend to address the ship's company. Will you have the goodness to turn the hands up on the main-deck; let the officers attend here."

Immediately the shrill whistles of the boatswain's mates, in strange contrast with the hoarse voices of the latter, resounded through the various decks, and the men swarmed up in clusters, in numbers and activity like a colony of ants, when by chance the foot of some home-returning peasant disturbs their carefully built habitation.

I like, sometimes, to indulge in a simile. The old Commodore stood centrally among his officers, the men compressed together beneath

him on the main-deck, looking up to him with a great deal of respect.

"Silence!" said the old man, in a gruff voice. As, unlike our popular assemblies, there was no one to break it by calling for it again, every one stood as mute as if a voice was about to address them from the clouds.

"As I wish every man to hear the few words that I am going to say, let those who are farthest off, tumble up upon the booms." There was a little scuffling for about half-a-minute, and then all again was hushed.

"Now mark ye me, my lads; you thought, didn't ye, that when I came to command you, you had caught a Tartar—one who would keep you in fine order—and you have not been deceived; for a better-behaved, a more orderly, or a happier crew, I never beheld!"

Here he was interrupted by a faint cheer, that would shortly have increased to an outrageous one, had he not gently waved his hand, and said, "You know that, in general, I do

not like cheering; and I am sure just now you will not do what I dislike. I assure you, on the honour of a very old seaman, I have done everything that my heart could suggest to oblige you—now it is your turn to oblige me; you will not deceive me—if I thought so, that alone would be sufficient to make the few grey hairs that the many years of hard service have left me, go down with sorrow to the grave."

"Ye are all of you young, very young men compared with me—few of you have attained forty, perhaps not half-a-dozen among you can tell his fifty years. I am upwards of threescore—I am thus naturally, by Providence, as well as legally, by his sacred Majesty, may God bless him! put in authority over you." (Hat off, as heretofore; for Sir Octavius, since his re-appointment, had found again all his loyalty.) "And that authority you know I have used as a father; give me then the respect and love of sons, and show it in the approaching action, and where the old man, the old sailor, your

commander and your father, is, be you there also, my sons; dishonour not his wounds, let him conquer with you, or die gloriously among you."

The lieutenants, and the midshipmen particularly, did not half like this; they pressed more affectionately about the old gentleman, looking reproachfully into his face, and placing their hands to the hilts of their swords, making their actions say as plainly as acting could speak, "Are we not also your sons—may we not surround you, our more than father?"

Sir Octavius understood it, though not one of them had uttered a word. He took off again his three-cornered hat, turned to them, and making them a grateful bow, merely said, "I thank you."

Again facing towards the men, he said, "You have all, of course, been looking at that three-decker; I want her—you will assist me to get her. She is an old friend, or rather an old plague of mine. Some three years ago I chased her nearly round the world; she escaped

me, after all. Through her a great domestic affliction fell upon me; and in losing her, I lost almost all of happiness that was left in the world for a man so stricken in years as myself.

"I tell you, my sons, I covet that ship excessively; you will get her for me. I see by your countenances that you will. I have weighed the matter in my mind, and I intend to carry her by boarding; her sides are high—but you are young and active, and her port-holes are large—I will lead the boarders! No remonstrance, Captain Egerton; I have maturely weighed the matter, and am not to be shaken from my purpose. Victorious or defeated, this method will cost to both sides much less loss of human life."

Here, notwithstanding the respect and awe that every one had of the old gentleman, he could not prevent the clamorous application of persons volunteering to be of the boarding party, which applications the regularly-appointed boarders on the quarter-bill treated as

an infringement of their rights, and an offence to their dignities.

Silence being again enjoined, Sir Octavius proceeded thus: "In this boarding affair, my lads, mark ye me, we will have only the regular boarders, and the marines, with their respective officers. The marines to act as a covering party. But the forlorn hope, the one which I myself will head, I have already selected."

This announcement produced a great deal of surprise, which was not a little increased at hearing the Commodore order Mr. Baldwin, the captain's clerk, to bring him the black list.

"Now, my men," continued the Commodore, holding this formidable record in his right-hand, and counting down the names with the iron spike screwed on his left-arm, "I find here are fifty-three of you, who have all committed offences, more or less; here, Mr. Baldwin, call over the list, and let every man of you, as he comes up, toe a line on the gangway."

The names were called over, the men assem-

bled, and a more determined-looking set of fellows fit for assault and storm, with about four or five weakly exceptions, were perhaps never before gathered together.

Now I, the old scribbling mariner, must digress. In the military service, whether ashore or afloat, the best moral man is not always the *best* man. The moral man, quiet, obedient, and conscientious, doing his general duty without reproach, may not be, and most often is not, the best man to schindy up a ship's sides, cut half-a-dozen throats with a velocity startling to the sufferers, leap down amidst a plump of opposing boarding spikes, laugh at a wound, and either clear the decks with a hurrah, or die on the spot with a jest in his mouth. The men who will do all this, are your harum-scarum chaps; fellows that love their grog—O how they love it!—always in some little scrape, that your quiet, good man has ever the good sense to avoid; and yet, the time in actual warfare comes but too often, when a half-dozen of these wild, ne'er-

do-themselves-good, are worth two score of your simply good men. For my part, I say it, perhaps, in the silliness of my age, I hope that neither our army nor navy may ever want lots of these dare-devils, whom I would not reform if I could; and I suppose that is the reason why my friend Sir Octavius would not punish them. There, however, he had them all in a line, looking as merry as men going to a wedding, when they themselves are not to be wed.

"Now these," said the Commodore, "are to make the first rush. I give them the post of honour, in order that they may convince their brother sailors that I, in forbearing to punish them—in not dishonouring them by the lash—have respected the truly British courage that is in them. I give them this opportunity of wiping off the disgrace that offences always must place upon good but erring men; they will be grateful to me for this opportunity of showing that my lenity has not been misplaced. But I am not going to allow all of you black-listers this

honour. I must see of what nature your offences are, each of you, before I admit you into my band of glory. First, Daniel O'Sullivan; drunk, one, two, three—fourteen times. O Daniel O'Sullivan, this is too bad!"

"Fait and it is, yer honner," said a fine, handsome, but rather wild-looking young Irishman; "and, Sir Hoctivey, it's your ownself that has broken my heart right intirely by yer kindness. Plase yer honner, do me that great favour to flog me. I desarves it, yer honner; do punish me, and aisier in my mind will I be for it."

"Well, O'Sullivan, as we shall shortly have hard work, I'll do what I can to ease your mind by giving you manual chastisement. There, Sullivan; and now do your duty by me like a man."

The Commodore struck him gently and familiarly on his ruddy cheek. O'Sullivan seized the hand and kissed it, and then, letting it fall, as if ashamed of his sudden emotion and

the action it occasioned, exclaimed, "I axes your pardon humbly, Sir Hoctivey; but won't I though?—won't we?" turning to his fellow black-list men, driving his right hand forcibly into the hollow of his left. At that moment many a silent oath was recorded of a life's devotion to the old Commodore.

The black-list was gone regularly through. All those who had been guilty of mean and pitiful offences were excluded; on these fell the most degrading cloak of ignominy. Those that remained, which was, by the bye, the greater proportion, were ordered to arm themselves with the boarders' weapons—that is, the well-sharpened cutlass, fastened to the wrist with a lanyard, the cleaving tomahawk, with its point wherewith to thrust, and its bill-like blade to drive in to the ship's side, thus affording something to assist the boarders in climbing; and, last of all, the broad leathern belt, with its two large and serviceable ship's pistols.

When they were all thus properly armed and arrayed before the Commodore, an impudent little midshipman came up to him, and, taking his hat off very humbly, respectfully reported himself as having been drunk the preceding night, and requested to be put on the black list.

The old Commodore liked his spirit, and granted his request. Immediately, a dry, forty-year-old master's-mate, seeing the success of this scheme, came up, and acknowledged that he had not been sober for the last ten days.

"Are you sober now?"

"Perfectly, Sir Octavius."

"Well, keep so, till after we have carried the French admiral. I will put you on the black-list, in the hope that it may get you on the Navy List; but now, gentlemen," seeing half-a-dozen more advancing to claim the same honour, "I tell you, my black list is quite full, and I would not place another person upon it,

even if it were a prince of the blood that requested me."

Never was a black-list turned to a better advantage.

The Commodore then turned courteously to his captain, and said to him, "Pray, Egerton, do not take it amiss that I thus appear to usurp your post. My lads, I am myself at the head of the black-list. I have a great thing to expiate; but it is a matter of private feelings. I lead you. I had an ancestor, who once raised the battle-cry on the field of Agincourt. Let us raise it once more. Mark ye me! In the hurry and darkness and smother of the smoke, let the sign of an Englishman and the word of challenge be '*Néstroque!*' and the countersign and answer, 'Augustus!' Let no foot draw back—strike home! And yet, my sons, there is one thing that I would say to you. I have been looking out upon the French admiral; he is, like me, an old man. I have seen his white hairs—a thin, white-haired old man, my lads.

If you come across him, and he is not resisting, or resisting but feebly, spare him—for my sake. Think that we are the two oldest men among you—friends and foes. And now you know my mind. When I've laid the Thunderbolt alongside, remember the rally-cry, '*Néstroque!*'—remember the countersign, 'Augustus!' Go to your stations."

By this time, the English squadron had so far fetched a-head, that the headmost ship of the French line was considerably abaft the beam of the Thunderbolt. The signal was accordingly made to tack in succession. When this was performed, the enemy's headmost ship lay nearly about one point on the weather-bow. They, however, continued on the same tack, that is, on the opposite tack to the English squadron. They now approached each other rapidly, and were shortly within range of their respective guns. Had the squadrons a little longer sailed in this manner, the old Commodore would just have fetched the admiral; but when

Sir Octavius was within half-gun shot, the whole of the French line poured in their larboard broadsides, and then bore up. To avoid the raking fire of their starboard broadsides, the Commodore bore up also, and thus both fleets ran together, before the wind, broadside to broadside.

Then really commenced the tumult of the scene. The reverberating guns awed the waters into stillness, and hushed the winds, that appeared to hang listlessly about the conflict in silent horror. The homicides fought beneath the unclouded vault of heaven in a lurid atmosphere of their own, as if to veil from the eye of angel how demoniacal can become the strife of man. From whence shall we view the scene of carnage; or shall we view it at all?

Shall we pace the quarter-deck, and see who fall there, and by what ghastly wounds? Shall we go below, and walk amidst the guns on the smoke-surcharged decks, and view the limbs dashed about of the dismembered seamen; or descend still lower into the cockpit, and hang

over the mutilated and dying, whilst skill and medicine in vain strive to arrest the fleeting soul.

No, we will do none of these. Things terrible as these delight not us. We will keep close to the old Commodore, who, alas! having been roused by the hissing shot, and having snuffed in the sulphureous vapours from the death-dealing guns, began to give way to his innate thirsting for destruction. Once more his commands were given with lusty oaths; once more his temper began to rebel against his judgment; and he found himself raving, because the failing breeze had as yet been insufficient to place him in contact with the Magnifique.

The broadsides from the French three-decker, La Magnifique, were terrible; and, had they been well-directed, would have been crushing. She could be likened to nothing so truly as to an immense volcanic rock upon the water, pouring forth smoke, fire, and thunder from her sides. She moved not; the gentle

swell had no effect upon her, and the light airs that filled, and now deserted, her loftiest sails, caused her no sensible progression. Sir Octavius, in his noble ship, was nearly abreast of her, with his black-list and his boarders lying down on the poop and quarter-deck, ready to pour themselves upon and into her, the moment that the vessels should be sufficiently near.

Loud was the whistling and devout the wishes for wind. This horrible calm was rapidly wasting away human life. The standing and running rigging of the Thunderbolt was already much cut, and her masts and yards were so wounded that it became doubtful if, when the much prayed-for breeze sprang up, that they would carry their respective sails. The smoke hung heavily about the ship, and the heat became almost insupportable.

At length, some good Power, as if in pity for this protracted slaughter, sent a strong flaw of wind from the south-west full on the starboard-beam of the English line, taking the vessels

partly aback, and shivering the sails of those, the yards of which were squared, and driving the thick and sulphureous smoke upon the French. Disregarding the chance of a few raking shots, the old Commodore put his helm a-starboard, and, in less than three minutes, with a dreadful concussion, the Thunderbolt lay alongside, and grappled to the Magnifique. So dense was the smoke that the enemy were fairly taken by surprise; for there were no more persons on the upper-decks than were necessary to work the guns, with the exception of some companies of troops.

Through the port-holes, over the hammock-netting, and up the shrouds, the English seamen swarmed, as if by miracle, and assembled in crowds from all quarters upon the Frenchman's quarter-deck, gangways, and forecastle. The poop was held by the French soldiers; and as they, at the first onset, had broken away the poop-ladders, the position ought to have been one difficult to carry, and most annoying to those on the decks below.

With the activity—and, I am sorry to add, the headlong recklessness—of youth, the Commodore swung himself into the main-rigging of the French admiral, and thence dropped himself among a knot of officers on the quarter-deck, to their infinite surprise. I will not say that he was the first on board, but, most certainly, he was among the first. Again his powerful voice lifted up the family battle-cry, "*Néstroque!*" and many a heavy blow fell upon the devoted heads of the French at the cry of "Augustus!" Tall, robust, with his scarred skull—for his hat had fallen off—his patched eye, and his countenance glowing like molten iron, Sir Octavius struck those opposed to him with a sudden fright, which was no little increased by the singular manner in which he was armed. Upon the termination of his left arm, he had screwed a long double-edged weapon, which he whirled about after the manner we may suppose the scythes of our ancestors gyrated at the axletrees of their rude chariots; with his right hand, bearing an immense and approved ship's cutlass,

he slashed at everything he saw before him, and thus bore down all opposition.

So sudden was this irruption upon the Frenchman's decks, that the men who were working the quarter-deck guns had no time to change their ramrods and cartridge-cases for boarding-pikes and arms suitable to a hand-to-hand encounter. A seaman had just sponged one of the guns, when Sir Octavius came sweeping by him; to defend himself he thrust the dirty sponge full in the old Commodore's face, and then gave him a couple of knocks with it on the pate, after which ungentle operation, the old man looked as black as any London chimney-sweeper. In this ludicrous state, he pushed on until he entered the cabin under the poop, and there he met, face to face, the shrivelled French admiral. He was a thin old man, and had much the appearance of a monkey raised upon its hind-legs and dressed in uniform. He was all activity and grimace.

"Sacre! tonnerre!" he exclaimed, putting

himself into the most approved fencing attitude, and thrusting tierce and quart at his opponent with the rapidity of a flash of lightning. "Ces chiens des Anglois, sont ils commandés par un nègre!"

"Good words, Monsieur l'Amiral, good words!" said the old Commodore, shivering the Frenchman's thin piece of steel into twenty pieces.

"Peste!" exclaimed Monsieur, throwing away the useless hilt. "Bon!" continued he, drawing from his belt a pistol of elaborate workmanship, and presenting it full in the face of his antagonist.

"*Néstroque!*" shouted forth the Commodore, stamping with his foot. The battle-cry was not made in vain. It saved the black head of the black-list from being then and there laid low. As the French admiral was in the act of discharging his pistol, he found his arm knocked up, and himself seized, from behind, round his waist, and his thin little legs

kicking and dangling about a foot from the ground.

"And fait what will I do with him, yer honner? Shall I drop him into the say? Be aisy, yer little spalpeen, can't ye?" said Daniel O'Sullivan, the blackest man on the Commodore's black-list, giving his prisoner a shake, and carrying him towards the cabin windows.

The spluttering and crashing from the very small admiral's mouth would have been awful, had not his position been so ridiculous; yet was it admirable to observe how little a thing could make so great a noise.

"Do not harm him, Sullivan," said the Commodore, as well as he could for laughing.

"Not I, Sir Hoctivius. Get ye in there, Monsieur Crappo, and be quiet wid ye." Thus saying, this dainty dare-devil whipped the admiral into a compartment of a locker that ran from side to side across the cabin, close under the stern-windows, and, shutting down the lid upon him, the commander-in-chief of the

French squadron found himself closeted with himself, to his utter amazement and want of breath.

By the time that O'Sullivan had seated himself on the lid of the locker, and was coolly wiping the perspiration from his broad and handsome face, the Frenchman's deck was completely carried. Some of the enemy had jumped overboard, some had run up the rigging, a few had been knocked on the head, but the major part had fled to the main-deck.

"Sullivan, you will stifle your prisoner; give him some air. I must see how matters go on the main-deck;" and down on the main-deck he rushed, which was also speedily cleared. Having now confined the enemy to the middle and lower-decks, the Commodore ordered the hatches to be placed over them, and, having thus secured them, he returned to the quarter-deck; and, hailing Captain Egerton on board the Thunderbolt, requested him to pour the shot of every gun into the middle and lower

decks. This could be done effectually, as the ships were still close alongside of each other. But few shots, however, were fired, as the Frenchmen lowered their ports, thus offering no resistance.

The French troops still kept possession of the poop; but they were divided among themselves, and, without surrendering, remained inactive. Their naval and military authorities did not act in unison. Though these soldiers could not have recovered the ship, they might, had they done their duty, have occasioned great loss to the enemy.

Affairs were also in a terrible state on the lower decks of La Magnifique. The officers were forced to place strong guards over the fore and after powder-magazines, as a desperate party among the crew wished to blow themselves and the ship and their victors up together. Of course, things could not thus long remain.

The French colours were still flying at the gaff; and, though all signs of contention had

ceased on board the ship, they could not be hauled down until the French gentlemen, who were disputing on the poop, were conquered or consented to surrender. In the meantime, the old Commodore had again repaired to the cabin, where he still found O'Sullivan sitting very composedly on the locker, with the French admiral under him. The sailor had taken the precaution to give his prisoner sufficient air, and only just sufficient, to secure him from suffocation, by cutting up a wad into small pieces, and, inserting them under the lid, prevented it from closing by about one inch. The spluttering from within was incessant, but little regarded by him who held the remonstrant in such durance vile.

Going to the cabin-windows, Sir Octavius hailed the Thunderbolt. "Egerton, elevate your quarter-deck guns, and clear the poop with a few bushels of grape. Fire high."

"Ay, ay, Sir Octavius."

"Ask them civilly to surrender first. Tell

them the ship is our's, and their admiral safe in his own wine-locker."

"Ay, ay, Sir Octavius."

The guns on the Thunderbolt's quarter-deck were loaded and pointed, and the troops requested to surrender and haul down the tri-color. Owing to their differences and their indecision, no definite answer could be obtained. One gun only was then fired: the grape was all-persuasive. The men fell on their faces, the officers called out that they had yielded, and the large and majestic colours slowly descended, never more to fly over the beautiful first-rate they had so long and so nobly decorated.

"Now, Egerton," said Sir Octavius, after the first batch of prisoners had been removed to the Thunderbolt and the English colours hoisted over the French, "you had better haul off a little, and let the enemy see that the admiral is in our possession. We can manage the ship very well ourselves."

These orders were promptly obeyed, and

produced the happiest effects. Two of the line-of-battle ships of the French squadron, which had already received a more than sufficiency of iron argument to convince them that they ought to yield, immediately struck. The other two thought this the most fitting opportunity in the world to try their rate of sailing with the British squadron. They also were soon overtaken—which was bad; and taken—which was worse. Captain Oliphant, with the assistance of the brig, had already made himself master of the frigate that was dismasted at the commencement of the action, whilst her consort was the only French vessel that effected her escape, and bore the news into Rochfort that M. Frèsnoy's gallant squadron were, unexpected by himself and by all those whom he had so lately commanded, making the best of their way to Portsmouth, in order to refit.

But we have a little anticipated. The two lower decks, that is to say, the middle and lower batteries of La Magnifique, with three-fourths

of her crew, have not, as yet, confessed themselves subdued. Captain Egerton has, however, sent most of the Thunderbolt's boats with fresh drafts of men, so that the Frenchmen, cooped up as they are, would only evince madness by resisting. But there are *têtes mentées* among them, persons jealous of the honour of the new republic, and who would willingly, by desperation, endeavour to conceal their want of conduct and of steady valour.

But more than all this, Sir Octavius was careful of the lives and limbs of his own men, and not willing to make a greater sacrifice than necessary of those of the enemy. Therefore he now most ardently desired that the French between decks should make a peaceable surrender.

During these proceedings, which, by-the-bye, occupied but a very little space of time, Daniel O'Sullivan remained seated upon the lid of the locker that contained the French admiral, holding with him an uninterrupted conversation, in which it fell to the lot of the man of rank to

supply most of the words, and to the main topman not to understand a single syllable of them. All that Daniel could comprehend was, that the gentleman in durance was in a passion, a very great passion, which puzzled the honest fellow, for as he soothingly told him, "If he had a scantling o' sinse, he might make himself as aisy were he was, as his riverince's pig in the heretic parson's clane straw."

Sir Octavius now felt that he had too much neglected this distinguished person. He could not understand the various degrees of laughter that he himself excited wherever he appeared. As he approached the bin, O'Sullivan grinned most decidedly, and a decided grin on his countenance showed more real humour than a bad jest-book.

"What do you see, sir,—you, and the rest of you, to be making all these grimaces at me? Is my face very dirty?" For the man with the blackened sponge had struck him too hard to permit him to be quite unconscious of the sooty application.

"Dirty, yer honner?—not a bit of it, Sir Hoctivius, it is past all that; yer honner's as clane a looking blackamoor as ever I seed in my life, barring the white in yer honner's beautiful eye, may God bless and presarve it, and yer honner's good set o' grinders, there's not a speck about your figure-head that's not as black as the top of an Hirish winter's night, and the moon down."

"Well, well, a little soap and water. But how is the admiral?"

"Rombustrous to a pavarsity, not by no means understandable, Sir Hoctivius Baccky-squirt."

"How do you do, Monsieur l'Amiral, comment—and so on—will you surrender—yield, you comprenez?"

"What you mean, Saar Nèger, heel'd—me rendre? Les François meurent mais ils ne rendent jamais?"

"Very true, no doubt on't, Monsieur—but all your squadron have struck."

"La fortune de la guerre! Peste! I vil rende. Je me rende, Monsieur le Négre, so you vil a let me out of dis vile——, and me speak you formidable."

"Hand the gentleman out, O'Sullivan."

Covered with straw, bits of oakum, and all manner of maritime rubbish, the splendidly dressed little man stood before his conqueror. After shaking off as much of these additaments to his person as he could, he first stamped fiercely with his right foot, and then broke out thus. "Monsieur le Nègre, me your prisonier; vell, me can no fight you in the name of my grande nation, but me fight you for my one self; for, saar, for why you make this one man put me, l'amiral, like twenty, seven, four empty bouteilles, in my own beaufêt? Sacre nom de Dieu!"

"What could we do with you, admiral?—you were so violent. Blood and brass blunderbusses! why the devil did you suffer one of your men to mess me all over with a sooty sponge,

and almost put out my larboard eye? Is that, Monsieur, treating the English commander-in-chief like a gentleman?—*G—d damme!* and that's better swearing than your pitiful *sacre.*"

"Juste ciel! vous n'êtes pas nègre véritable? touche la, mon ami, touche la," said the quickly pacified Frenchman, extending his hand. The Commodore's rising effervescence subsided; he took the proffered hand, and then they went together on the poop. The Frenchman soon saw how complete was the victory. He laid his hand upon his breast, and, whilst the tears stood in his aged eyes, he sighed forth. "France is lost to me for ever."

He then, accompanied by the Commodore, went to the main-hatchway on the middle deck, and removing a part of the battens, he hailed those below thus. "Tout est perdu. Rendons nous, mes fils."

Thus was La Magnifique lost and won. The boats of the Thunderbolt were now actively employed in conveying the French pri-

soners to the English vessel. Captain Egerton was appointed to the command of the French admiral's vessel, and the first lieutenant of the Thunderbolt to be her captain, and other arrangements made, usual on similar occasions.

By four o'clock, P. M., everything was in tolerable order in both fleets, and what sail the wounded masts and yards of the ship could bear was made, and the course laid for Portsmouth.

I have purposely avoided the horrible in my brief and indifferent description of this memorable engagement. Considering the extent of the success, and the slaughter usual on events like this, the loss of life was comparatively small; but it was all too great for humanity to contemplate without shuddering, and we will therefore conceal the dead from the reader's sight, by spreading over them the broad banners of victory, and the gorgeous flags of glory—glory ?—assuredly.

At a little after four, the old Commodore sat

down to dinner with M. Frèsnoy the French admiral, and some of his principal officers. He had taken care to wash his face well, and have his stiff tail clubbed afresh, with new ribbon. He was all courtesy and good-humour, and said all those very proper things to console his prisoner —guest, which only made him feel more acutely his situation. The old gentleman, reformed as he was, had still a few most important leaves to turn over in the large book of humanity. However, he did his best; and as somebody has said when the best has turned out very bad indeed, "angels can do no more."

After the wine and coffee, there not being anything very inspiriting for M. Frèsnoy to view from the decks, Sir Octavius Bacuissart proposed a game at whist, which proposition was very gladly accepted. Sir Octavius having screwed on his spring-nippers, the party set-to with great self-satisfaction. Sir Octavius was in high luck; he won rub after rub, and though the stakes for which he played would now be

thought paltry, yet his success seemed to give him as much pleasure as did his recent splendid victory.

The French admiral paused in his play, and began to converse very fluently, if not very sensibly, about the omnipotence of luck, or fortune, or accident. He stated that, about three or four years ago, he had been in command of a squadron which had sailed nearly round the world; that that squadron had been chased by an English one of much inferior force; that he felt assured that then his good fortune was with him, for chased as he was, he had succeeded in everything that he had been commissioned to do, for, that he had captured and destroyed several fleets of English merchantmen, and then, striking the table violently with his hand, he asseverated that, if then he had been permitted to have fought the pursuing fleet, he should have assuredly conquered them, because—because his star was then in the ascendant—but now that he had been sent out purposely to fight,

that every care had been taken to render his squadron efficient, and that he himself had been incessant in his labours to make it complete, he found, to his utter dismay, and inconceivable astonishment, in less than an hour from the commencement of the action, himself popped into his own wine-locker, and his fleet in the possession of an enemy. Surely there was something like a fate in this, that laughed at all previous arrangement, despised the calculations of human wisdom, and defied all the efforts of mature consideration, courage, and conduct."

To all this the old Commodore shook his head very gravely, saying but little. He did not wish to destroy this flimsy structure of comfort in which his prisoner wished to take refuge; neither did he like to see the splendour of his own achievements demolished by an argument. He therefore briefly told M. Frèsnoy that, in the late action he had fully done his duty, and, in fact, had done, under all the circumstances, all that man could do; but he begged leave

respectfully to differ from him, in his belief that he would have beaten that particular squadron that had chased him so many months through so great a portion of the seas and oceans of the world; as he himself had had the honour of waiting upon him during that very tedious and unprofitable cruise, the worst, he added, which he had ever made in his life, and the only one which he wished had never occurred.

A fresh shaking of hands took place at this announcement, and the foreigner then proceeded to endeavour to show that, at that time, his fortunate star predominated. We will not attempt to imitate the broken English of the gentleman through his longer speeches: were we writing a drama, it would be essentially necessary to do so, but, in a lengthened narrative of facts, such imitations are apt to become tedious.

He went on to detail the number of vessels that he had destroyed; the large fleet of merchantmen that he carried captived into Cher-

bourg, with all which the reader is acquainted, and then said, " Even, Sir Octavius, in the slight rencounter that we had, the advantage was most decidedly mine. Not one single shot that you fired on that evening took effect."

" No, admiral, it was sufficient success for me that I hauled off your d—d lee shore. O that cursed night—a night, sir, that renders this glorious day almost unhappy."

" Indeed, Sir Octavius, I only knocked away an insignificant spar or so on board of you, and took one prisoner."

" One prisoner! You amaze me. For the love of God trifle not. Who was he?"

" Monsieur seems deeply interested. He was a noble lad, a *beau garçon*. He was found under the bows of that very three-decker which you have done me the honour to take. My fools, first of all, took him for the conductor of a catamaran—an infernal, that was to blow us into the air; but, on hauling him and the dreadful machine on board, one proved to be a half-

drowned lad, nearly inanimate with cold, and the other a hencoop, but very indifferently put together. They had both floated into the harbour with the flood-tide."

During the narration, the Commodore trembled all over; robust as he was, he nearly fainted. He called, however, for brandy—it was wrong, certainly, considering his solemn promise to Mr. Underdown; but even that severe Mentor would have pardoned him in this case, and so will we. After he had swallowed this reprobated restorative, he seized M. Frèsnoy by the hand, and grasping it in a manner so forcible that its little shrivelled fingers crackled like laurel-leaves in the fire, he exclaimed hoarsely, from excessive emotion, and perhaps by a deep and an unconscious association with the holiest of feelings, in the very words of the bible, so touching from their simplicity—"Does he yet live?"

"To the best of my knowledge, he does."

"Gracious God, I thank thee! Now, ad-

miral, tell me, and in words as few as possible, did that youth say through what cause he came to be in that situation? Did he say anything about being compelled to jump overboard? How did he get into the water? Did he lay blame on any one?"

"On none but himself: he said he had been too rash—that that rashness had caused him to be in the miserable predicament in which he had been found—he seemed to wish us all to understand that his being overboard was purely the effect of accident."

"You hear that, gentleman, you hear that," said the old Commodore, turning triumphantly to his officers. "Noble, generous fellow, that he was! I need not ask you if his name was Astell?"

"It was."

"Did he tell you anything of me—of his family?"

"Not a word. He was scrupulously silent upon the subject."

"Now mark ye me, admiral, you have just made me the happiest dog alive. I glory in calling myself the uncle of that heroic boy. You have made me so happy, that I could find it my heart to give you back your ship and squadron, and fight you for them over again. I could, by hither and thither, and that's all the swearing I'm allowed—but I can't, you know I can't—the articles of war are against it, Monsieur."

"These strange English!" was the only and philosophical reply.

"But I have a sacred duty to perform. Excuse me for a few minutes." The old gentleman then retired into his after-cabin, to tranquillise his agitated feelings by prayer, and a giving of thanks from the inmost recesses of his heart.

He returned to his company in a short space of time, with a serene brow, and the very portrait of intellectual happiness. He could no longer play at cards; he could do nothing but

talk of his nephew. His officers, with gentlemanly delicacy, seeing that such a conversation involved many private and family matters, dropped off one by one, and soon left him alone with his prisoner.

The admiral told the old Commodore that he had taken a liking to the youth, and had endeavoured to gain his esteem. That he had taken him to sea for a cruise with him, in order to dispel his melancholy, and perhaps win him to join the cause of universal liberty, by fighting under the banners of revolutionary France. The admiral further said, that he was inexorable to his intreaties, and received with contempt the most splendid offers, and only petitioned, as the greatest of favours that could be done to him, to be put on shore on any spot of England, or of any English territory. This it was impossible for the admiral to do; and, at last, he was compelled to yield him as a prisoner to the authorities. He also ascertained that he had been confined at Verdun, from whence he

had soon after made his escape, assisted in his enterprise by a family disaffected to the present government, and that, no doubt, he was at present concealed in some obscure place in France.

Consolatory as was this general account to the old Commodore, still there was much in it to give him disquietude. He heartily thanked M. Frèsnoy for the kindness that he had shown his young relative, and they both retired to their respective beds, most excellent friends, especially considering the length of their acquaintance, and the energetic style of its commencement.

In less than forty-eight hours the two fleets were anchored at Spithead. The nation burst forth with one voice of acclaim at this splendid victory. For weeks hardly anything was spoken of, but the old Commodore, the fighting old Commodore, the dashing old Commodore—in fact, he attained that climax of human glory, of being hung up as an alehouse sign in al-

most every town and large city in the kingdom; and furthermore, of being made the hero of a ballad. In fact, for about a month, he was a small fortune to the peripatetic vocalists.

These spontaneous tributes are the truest tests of glory. How many men I know that have been made barons, viscounts, earls, marquesses, and even dukes, that never had merit enough to figure in a ballad, and that, though they perhaps deserved to be hung up — they could never get the meanest hedge-house beer-shop in the kingdom to do them the honour. I might have been on a sign myself — only they put me most unaccountably on the shelf, now nearly thirty years ago.

CHAPTER VI.

What a hell of witchcraft lies
In the small orb of one particular tear!
SHAKSPEARE'S LOVER'S COMPLAINT.

THE winding-up of my story approaches. I have aspired at great things. I am a human aspen-leaf. The flame of my ambition has risen to a vast height; and the higher a flame ascends, the more it trembles. But I cannot, or at least I ought not, to fail. The public will not put my book unneglected on the shelf, as the Lords of the Admiralty, of so many excellent administrations, have done by its very aged author. No, I shall not utterly fail; for my purpose

and my aim throughout, in recording these events, have been to benefit my fellow-men, and to show them how, by bearing and forbearing, they may benefit each other.

The mummery of municipal applause and courtly congratulations were now wearisome to the old Commodore. The freedom of the metropolis, presented to him in a box of gold, was not so much prized by him as would have been the freedom to repair immediately to Trestletree Hall, to embrace the daughter on whom he doated, and be the first to tell her that his and her Augustus lived. The hero's best triumphs will always be found at last in the bosom of his own family. It was there that the Commodore panted to feel his glory; there only could he fully enjoy it, for there only could he share it with those who would cling fondly around him.

However, we must leave him, for a short time in London, preparing to go to court, in *full uniform*, and occupying himself with energetic measures for the recovery of Augustus.

Let us be present at the arrival at Trestle-tree Hall of Miss Rosa Belmont and her maid, attended by Mr. Underdown and Peter Drivel. Their coming spread an universal joy throughout the mansion. Mrs. Oliphant, without knowing the tender ties that bound the lady to her son, received Rosa with all the affection of a mother, and, though only a grocer's widow, with all the genuine grace of a lady. Miss Matilda thought her the nicest dressed person she ever beheld; but made her mind up, at once, that the surpassing brilliancy of her colour, and the wonderful transparency of her dark complexion, must be artificial, and had already promised herself much increase of beauty from the cosmetic mystery.

But the effect of the lady's entrance into the drawing-room upon poor dear romping Rebecca was the most startling and the most distressing. She was about to rush upon Rosa with her usual boisterous impetuosity, and seize her hands, when the natural *retenue* and innate

dignity of feeling of Miss Belmont made her unconsciously draw herself up a little proudly. Becky stopped short in her rush, and exclaimed, "Gracious me, how beautiful! I am sure she will never love such a slatternly thing as I am. I could tear my hair off!"

She spoke this passionately, pouting and half crying, and fairly turned her back upon the company. Notwithstanding all her promises of amendment, she had not improved very much in the graces since her father's departure.

"Why?" said Mr. Underdown, in reply to her very feminine, or rather unfeminine, threat, "The hair is very beautiful, is it not, Miss Belmont? This young lady is Miss Bacuissart, the only daughter of Sir Octavius; be known to each other."

"The hair is beautiful, indeed, and nearly surrounds the face of an angel. Not love you, my dear! How *could* you think so! I travelled I don't know how many hundred miles on purpose to love you, and all whom I am so

happy as to find here. Come, we will be the most intimate friends possible, and I'll show you the prettiest manner of doing up that beautiful hair."

"You are all kindness and benevolence," said Miss Matilda, making Miss Belmont a low curtsey of gratitude.

"Pooh, pooh! never mind my hair. Will you look at me with those fine dark eyes tenderly? Will you lay that beautiful cheek to mine? Will you hug me—kiss me—this way, and this? Will you not quite, quite despise me?"

She suited her actions to her words, flung herself into Rosa's arms, kissed her again and again, and then burst into tears. From that moment, the friendship of these two very opposite beings was inviolable.

It was after this that the improvement of Rebecca really and rapidly began. The four years of seniority on the part of Rosa gave her something of the authority of a mother; but this was only felt, for it was so beautifully

wrapped up in the living tenderness of the sister and the devotion of the friend, that that very authority was the greatest bond of union between them. Rebecca made Miss Belmont her model in everything; she even attempted to imitate her in her somewhat stilted phraseology, which was a very good corrective for the usual homeliness of her own.

The effect of this friendship was also most beneficial to Rosa. She began perceptibly to talk less and less every day of the delicate susceptibilities of the immaterialised mind, and the roseate hues of diffident love blushing through the veil of bashfulness. The natural bursts of feeling that were so common to Rebecca lighted up, in the bosom of Rosa, more healthful and much purer sources of sensibility. She began to understand and conceive a great affection for moral dignity, and the conversations of Mr. Underdown with both his pupils—for such in effect, though not in name, they were—began to give one lady an insight into

the beauties, and a love for the obligations, of religion, whilst they tended to confirm in the other what had been so early and so carefully implanted.

In one little month, Rosa was only half as romantic as formerly, and almost wholly rational. In the same little month, Rebecca had made as much progress in lady-like acquirements as her model had in good sense, which is saying a good deal for both ladies, and more than I, at my age, would venture to say for most. During that little month, the old Commodore had been cruising, fighting, and playing the courtier. Captain Oliphant had been doing the first two, and was most eager to do the last at the feet of his beautiful Rosa.

But where, all this time, is Mr. Rubasore?

Not very distant, you may be sure; for, just now, there is a very great deal of mischief concocting

Yes, I think that it was in the beginning of August—not earlier than the second, nor later

than the seventh, of that month—that, one evening, Rosa and Rebecca had strolled, arm-in-arm, into one of the thickest preserves of Trestletree Hall. They feared no danger, though it was late in the evening, for this preserve was included in the park palings that surrounded the grounds of the house. The day had been sultry, and the dews had not yet fallen, so the ladies continued their walk, hither and thither, upon the open and grassy glades.

Miss Belmont had not yet lost her taste for moonlight, and Miss Bacuissart was rapidly acquiring hers. With their beautiful arms entwined round each other's slender waists, the dark and the fair beauty were nearly as happy in their communion of thought as two persons of the same sex can possibly be. Indeed, I doubt, had Rosa changed her companion for Captain Oliphant, and Rebecca hers for her cousin Augustus, whether there would have been more happiness—I say nothing about transports.

That evening Miss Belmont had made her confession. Nothing of her past life had she concealed from her friend; and, with great magnanimity, had been tolerably severe upon her errors.

Now Miss Bacuissart hated Mr. Rubasore, if it could be said she hated anything. She, therefore, made herself and her companion merry by relating his race to save his pigtail. From thence, she proceeded to give her friend the history of her own life, how she had been spoiled, and how much she enjoyed the process; and how deeply ashamed she now was of having ever entertained feelings so selfish and pernicious. She next spoke of Augustus. It was then that her blue eyes engendered flames that outvied even the lustrous eyes of Rosa; it was then that her gentle bosom—too full of a hopeless, of a desponding love—heaved to all but bursting; it was then that her fair brow flushed, that her downy cheek mantled, and that she stood forth and away from her com-

panion in all the majesty of a deep sentiment, that the lady of the delicate susceptibilities had only begun to comprehend.

"Rosa!" she exclaimed, no longer clinging to her for support, no longer looking up to her for direction, but standing before her in all the independence—perhaps in the superiority—of an innately greater soul, "Rosa, I loved him, even as a child. It seemed to me, when I was crouching near him, that I was sitting in a peaceful sunshine, all around and all within me seemed so blissful with heavenly light; I was so very happy! I love my father, Rosa, fondly love him—dear, good, passionate old man; and I ruled him—I loved him for that too; yet I never ruled Augustus, and yet I loved him a thousand times better than I loved my father. It is shocking to say so, but, O my Rosa, it is true. Were he alive, you should not see him; you would love him. I tell you, you would, Miss Belmont."

"O Rebecca, do I deserve this?"

"No, my sweet monitress; you deserve nothing ill, but everything that is gracious, and pleasing, and good, excepting Augustus; and no one can deserve him—not even you. But woe is upon me—my heaviness of heart is a real illness to me. I speak of him as if he were living—as if he were not in inconceivable bliss with his God, looking down and pitying me, perhaps even loving me, if an angel of light can love so despicable a worm as myself. My heart is not good, Rosa; I cannot bear my misery; I must have some counter-excitement. I will again be the wilful tyrant of the house; there was amusement in it—and forgetfulness."

"Hush, hush, my dear Rebecca!"

"Who shall control me? Who shall dare bid me hush? Is not all around me mine? Where is the utility of the accomplishments that you teach me? Cannot I revere the memory of my Augustus, without displaying my figure, for fools to gaze at, at the harp? What

need I of geography, excepting to trace out the spot where they drowned him? Is French or German, Latin or Italian, necessary for me to call upon his loved name? Augustus! Augustus! Augustus! Melody are those syllables to my wild heart. They soothe me more than does the mother's hymn her half-sleeping child. Would it not be a glorious idea, Rosa, when my old father is dead—you see how little filial I am, but when I think of Augustus, I do not then so much love my father—when that ever angry old man is dead, would it not be glorious to pull down that massive old stone pile, and build up a tomb—a monument—a something with a hard name—what is it, Miss Belmont, speak?"

"A mausoleum," said the now subdued Rosa, actually subdued by the force of her friend's indomitable will.

"Mausoleum. The word is not so good as tomb, temple, or even grave-stone. Trestletree Hall would make a brave tomb-temple, would

it not, my friend? I—when my father is gone—I, Rebecca Bacuissart, will do it. But you do not speak, Rosa; do I terrify you? sometimes I frighten everybody. But, after all, I am but what they made me; and yet I should have been something, perhaps, had they not drowned Augustus."

"What shall I say to you, my dear Rebecca? I know you not in your new character. I see no more the half-bashful, the half-forward child, that was fast improving herself into the lady. I understand nothing about you but that I love you much, and—must I add it?—fear you a little."

"I will tell you something, Rosa—a secret; yet I blush not to avow it. At fourteen, I was a loving, a passionately loving, woman. They wrested him from me, and I have chosen to be a wilful child ever since. For Augustus I would have studied myself into a skeleton. In affluence I would have worshipped, in poverty have slaved for him. I would have discovered

his slightest wish so artfully, that I might be thrice blessed in doing it. I would, indeed. Had he said to me, Be the accomplished lady, the whole of our income, large as it is, should have been spent in masters. I would have carried wakefulness to the very verge of disease—exertion to weakness. Rosa, were Augustus living, and bade me—though you are older than I by three years—I would, in a few months, rival, excel you. Is this, think you, a vain boast? I know of nothing more powerful than my own will, except my unfortunate love."

"I firmly believe you. In the present excited state of your feelings, you know that I would not flatter you. Already have you learned, in a month, what took me a whole year to acquire. Mr. Underdown, amiable man that he is, laughs at *me* for my romance. Does he know the state of *your* feelings?"

"He knows how intensely I loved Augustus; but knows not, perhaps, the nature of that love.

The confession would not have been proper for masculine ears. He deems me yet a child, with all my father's violence of temper. The feeling for Augustus may be romantic; the world cannot give me a nobler, a better. It shall be my principle, living; dying, my support. But let me talk to you about his mother—his fearful mother. The world say that she is mad; but the world always say the injurious thing of that which they cannot understand. She has, like myself, taken up one vital principle: a never-dying love for her son. Let me relate the whole story to you; and, when you have heard it, do not hate us too much."

Rebecca then related to Miss Belmont the whole of the melancholy tale, sparing her father too little, and, as we are not in love, we must candidly confess, praising Augustus too much. This dreadful story, of a mere domestic nature, made Rosa blush for the value she had hitherto placed upon the finely delicate distresses of her romances; and the simple lan-

guage in which it was conveyed went straight home to her heart, and left there the remembrance of it for ever.

" Now, Rosa, knowing all this of my Augustus, you now see why, if he were alive, I would never have permitted you to pass this threshold. A greater tribute to your merits I could not have pronounced. Dead I can mourn for him, and live on; but I could never have seen him attached to another, and survive."

" Calm yourself, my dear Rebecca; he never could have preferred me, or any woman that ever existed, to yourself."

" How can you say so? I had almost said, how dare you? He was, like yourself, exceeding in his beauty; like yourself, he was polished in his manners, and the gentlest, though the bravest, of God's creatures. He positively had no self. Wherever he was, he seemed only to be the means of happiness to others. In all this, how like you! O that he had had some of that furious will, which is a part of

my identity; then he would not have allowed his savage uncle—my father, madam—to pluck him by very force from the arms of his mother, from his little, fond, obedient cousin; for then I was as obedient to him as fond. I had a will that ruled every one; and he, with a loving-kindness for all, that left him no will of his own, was the sole sovereign of mine; hence came this long train of mischiefs—hence this misery—this ever-to-be-remembered woe. And then, like you, he was so studious, and so accomplished; he had such lofty notions of the possibility of human perfection. Rosa, Rosa, he could not but have loved you."

"Well, my dear girl, I believe it—and I should have loved him; but not with the burning zeal of a reciprocal passion. We should have admired each other much, and complimented each other more; and then have stealthily tried comparisons with each other, about our various perfections. We should soon have stood in the light of rivals for the

world's admiration. I could not have drunk deeply at the well of his affections, nor he at mine, for we should have surrounded the approaches with too much finery—too much pretencc."

The not yet wholly tamed Rebecca had almost cried out here, "Speak for yourself, madam;" but contented herself with proudly throwing back her head, and shaking her beautiful curls.

"I see this displeases you; but it is the truth. There is my own dear Noll; may heaven bless him, daily and hourly, as I do; though I really wish his name was either Alfred or Edward,—Oliphant is well enough. I hold his noble heart, in all its simplicity, within mine. He loves me devotedly—I know he does; and admires me greatly, which I greatly like. Now I love him dearly, dearly, dearly; but there is a little tyranny in my love; for I love him the better, because I know I shall never find in him a rival a critic, or a judge.

I idolize him for his great moral worth, and he me for the little worth I may possess, and what he fancies the infinite educational perfections with which it is set off. Rebecca, I would not give blunt, honest, gallant, handsome Oliver for twenty Augustuses."

"I do not approve of your taste."

"There—but I am at least three years older than yourself. I see, that in dispelling your vision of jealousy, I have sunk in your estimation."

"Frankly, I could never bear Noll. He treated me like a child: would jocosely rub me with his rough beard, and only laugh at the most tremendous slaps on the face that I could give him. He to do all this, whilst I knew that I was a woman."

"Quietly, my Rebecca; there is some one near us."

"Impossible! this preserve is strictly private. I have ordered that not even the servants of the establishment shall presume to set a foot in it

without my permission. I am too well understood here to be disobeyed."

" I, however, presume to do it," said a person, stepping forward abruptly.

Miss Belmont screamed, and would have fled, whilst Rebecca stood forth, and, boldly facing the intruder, haughtily demanded, " how he dared do it ?"

" I am here, Miss Bacuissart, searching for a malefactor. I charge you, in the king's name, and as a magistrate, to impede me not. I have about me the lawful authority."

" It is that wretch Rubasore," said the unceremonious Rebecca.

" It is my odious guardian !" said the little-consoling Rosa.

" Miss Belmont ! By all that is impossible, it is she ! Pray, Miss, may I ask how you came here; and how, without my permission, you left Jaspar Hall. Where is Mrs. Dredgely ?"

Now the last query being the most easily

answered, was the first replied to by the young lady.

" Mrs. Dredgely is, much at your service, Mr. Rubasore, at Jaspar Hall, where she awaits your further instructions."

" And you ?"

" Miss Belmont has done with you, Mr. Rubasore," said Rebecca, taking up the *cable* of discourse, (the word thread is not strong enough,) " She has applied to the Lord Chancellor for honest guardians, who will not make love to her, and entrap her to sign promises of marriage to cross and disreputable old men ; and his lordship has been pleased to comply with her request, and she is now almost under the roof, but certainly within the grounds, of her legal guardians."

" I don't believe one word of it. I shall exercise my authority until, by course of law, I am required to lay it down. Rosa, return to your duty. I will say no more at present. Other more serious matters I shall have to urge

upon you at a more fitting opportunity; when I shall be able to prove to you that I am your best and your only friend. It may seem harsh, but you must now come with me."

"Oh, oh, oh!" screamed the delicate heroine.

"She sha'n't," was the simple ejaculation of Rebecca.

"I say she shall, Miss Minx. You ought to have been a-bed two hours ago—and whipped first, if you had had your deserts."

"Never mind what this old injurious wretch says. Run up to the house, Rosa, whilst I hold the poor thing here; and if he dare try to follow you, I'll shake him to death. Run, Rosa, run,—and bring down everybody."

Saying this, she seized him fearlessly. Rosa fled.

"Let me go—she-devil—let me go, I tell you. By heavens, I'll strike you to the earth, female though you be, if you do not unhand me. Will you, or not?"

"No, sir, you shall not move from hence,

until people come to apprehend you for this insulting trespass."

"Then thank yourself!" and down came the dastard fist upon the fair brow of the dauntless Rebecca.

She relaxed not her grasp, and winced not under the blow, though it was a severe and heavy one; she only exclaimed, "O that I had a weapon! that there were some brave arm near to avenge this insult upon the last of the Bacuissarts—why art thou dead, Augustus?"

Rubasore, as she pronounced the last word, was preparing to inflict another blow, and make a desperate effort to release himself, when he was felled to the ground, and a tall, ill-clad, wild-looking person, thrust into the hand of Rebecca a sharp poignard of a foreign manufacture. The eyes of each met for an instant, and the rescuer disappeared, merely saying, "Strike!"

"See how I am cursed with my evil wishes. But the wretch is senseless, and I will never be a shedder of blood. And yet, methinks he deserves it."

Many lights were now seen to approach, though in the bright moonlight that prevailed, they were little needed. Great was the astonishment of Mr. Underdown, and that of Mrs. Oliphant and her daughter, (for Miss Matilda Bacuissart had fainted, as usual,) to see Rebecca standing over the prostrate and insensible Rubasore, with a naked dagger in her hand.

Mr. Rubasore was carried into the house, and the imperative Doctor Ginningham with his cane, and the silent apothecary, were both there in due and *equally* beneficial attendance before the patient revived. The blow had been delivered with a free good-will, and by a hand as strong as it was liberal.

The first words that he uttered upon reviving, were, " The she-wolf strikes hard, but I will be revenged on the whole brood."

" Silence! my patient talks. Gag him. Take from him, my good Calumbo, another twelve ounces of blood if he dare utter a syllable. Mr. Rubasore, Mr. Rubasore, I told you that

you would one day be a patient of mine. Be patient. Not a word—not one word. The tail must go at last—we must shave his head—there may be some great internal lesion—the blow was terrible—he is going to speak, stop him. Mr. Calumbo, Mr. Calumbo, his head must be immediately shaved and blistered."

"I would sooner see it and you d—d first."

"Wild words! phrenitis supervening—have you anything like a strait-waistcoat in the house, good Mr. Underdown?"

"I really think that we are not so well provided," said our quiet friend, inwardly pleased at the course affairs were taking.

"A great oversight in a house of this description. Not, Mr. Underdown, that the remark applies to yourself. You speak little, and to the purpose—a great merit in you, sir. In that you imitate me closely. Yes; you and I give every one a turn. Now, then, for want of the waistcoat, order up four of your strongest servants—men of nerve, who will hold the poor

animal. I believe the man is going to attempt violence on me, his physician. Hold him, John Butler—I see, I see—a brain fever. Now, Mr. Rubasore, you may not yet be quite mad; but you will soon be so if I do not take these precautionary means."

"They will drive me mad—"

"Don't speak. Patients should hazard no remarks. Only answer their physician's questions. Now there is no question about this. Ah, these four men will do. Seize that gentleman, and hold him down. He will give you each a crown a piece when I have cured him. Hold him forcibly, yet gently—that will do. Is there anybody here who can shave?"

Peter Drivel stepped forward and said, with much impudence, that if "Mr. Rubasore would pay the poll-tax, he would shave him as closely as a tax-gatherer; and that he would do it so effectually, that he would not leave a single hair on his head to stand up and contradict him."

"Ah, a punster—we shall have plenty of lather—to work, to work, lads. Mr. Calumbo, run home, and fetch us an ample blister."

Mr. Rubasore, seeing things rapidly approaching to very disagreeable extremities, found that violence and vituperation only increased his peril. He therefore put on his blandest look and his most insinuating smile, and, in a small lady-like voice, requested Dr. Ginningham again to feel his pulse. He then poured a few wily compliments upon the great professional skill of his medical adviser; and stated how happy and how safe he felt when he reflected that he lived in his neighbourhood.

"That was an astonishing cure you made of widow Duck's dropsy."

"You may let go his right leg," said the physician.

"And, though the foolish old woman did die, it was entirely because she placed herself under the care of that pretender, Dr. Philpots."

"There will be no occasion for holding the patient's legs at all."

"Nay, Doctor, if you think they ought, I am submissive. I know when I am in good and discriminating hands. I should not trust myself this way to that Philpots—who, I am candidly informed, has no other authority for the M.D. he claps after his name, than an Aberdeen diploma."

"I always thought so. There is not the least occasion for holding the gentleman's arms—the fever is subsiding fast. There is no concussion of the brain, decidedly. I never heard a man speak more pertinently in my life. It will be unnecessary to shave and blister."

"Why, if you thought so—"

But the patient had found out the method of making the doctor think with him; and shortly after, they parted the best friends in the world, and Mr. Rubasore saved his tail, and remained, as yet, unshaved and unblistered.

CHAPTER VII.

" In tyrants' courts teach supple flattery;
Teach Jesuits, that have travell'd far, to lie;
Teach fire to burn, and winds to blow;
Teach restless fountains how to flow;
Teach the dull rock, fix'd to abide;
Teach woman-kind inconstancy and pride.
See, if your teaching them will useful prove;
But, prithee, teach me not to love.

COWLEY.

But Mr. Rubasore had, the next day, a more difficult account to settle with Mr. Underdown. At the mutual explanation that ensued between the two, the late guardian discovered, to his dismay, how his prospects had been ruined with his ward, and his character blasted with society.

In prosecuting his projects of revenge against the family of the Bacuissarts, he had con-

cealed himself in the neighbourhood of their mansion for reasons that will hereafter appear. He thus placed himself beyond the power of being communicated with by Sharpus, his attorney, who had duly sent him notice of the proceedings in chancery to his house, and to all his usual haunts.

He had never dreamt that such active steps would be taken to frustrate his schemes. He saw himself at once dishonoured, and cast out of all social intercourse of those who knew him. There were, perhaps, some few good points about this bad man's character, but they were hard to be discovered, and not very redeeming when found. He certainly had a great deal of moral courage, though generally exerted in an immoral cause, and that fixity of purpose that, at length, wearies fortune into the granting of success.

He bore himself up bravely against the cool contempt of Mr. Underdown, and the cuttingly manifested disdain of the ladies, who came to take a parting look at this very bad man.

When he doggedly signified that he was well enough to be removed, which was not till the following morning; and as his chariot stood at the door, Mr. Underdown said to him, without either emphasis or gesticulation,

"When Sir Octavius and Captain Oliphant return, you will, of course, do your best to deprecate their personal vengence. My duty is plain. You have committed a most unwarrantable trespass, after sun-set, upon the privacy of our grounds, and a severe and dastardly assault upon the heiress to the first estate and the first family in the county."

"The tigress struck hard," said the man between his teeth.

"It would not have been too hard had it stricken you to death. There is always an arm ready to avenge a Bacuissart."

"Vipers all!"

"Your pretence for searching for a malefactor, the name and description of whom you will not give us, is a shallow, and, I fear, a false pretence. We would have assisted you in

the search. But why take on yourself the office of constable? But it is all a mean subterfuge. I shall immediately indict you for the trespass and assault, and hold you to bail. You will expect a summons from the magistrates as soon as you arrive at your house. Your character is gone for ever; and, if that will but induce you to take yourself away from this neighbourhood, disgusting as the proceedings we must take against you are, we shall ultimately be thankful for, and rejoice in them."

"Have you finished?—is your venom expended?—Pampered parasite of this purse-proud family—mean and degraded as you are—even you shall shortly blush for it. I will bring them to the dregs of the earth—I will cover their name with the black pall of infamy—when men hear it, they shall spit from them in disgust. This will I do, and instantly. For you, wild cat, with the arm of the tinker's leman, I will plant thistles and nightshade on your early grave."

"Let me box the brute's ears."

"And for you, Miss Rosa, I will ruin you by going to law with you for your fortune, and hope, finally, to break your heart by beggary, mortification, and insult; all this will I surely do, or die in the attempt,—so help me God!"

Thus saying, he left the room, leaving his former ward not far removed from fits, Mr. Underdown, deeply moved with pity and disgust, and Miss Bacuissart still more strongly urged to fling the fire-tongs, the handle of which she had been fondling for the last five minutes, at the insulting threatener's head.

In the course of the day, Mr. Rubasore was compelled to make a very sorry display before a magistrate, and put in bail to answer for his appearance, to take his trial at the next county sessions, on the two separate charges of trespass and assault.

As concealment now would have been useless, Mr. Rubasore, instead of lurking about the country, and lodging at humble farm-houses, where his person was unknown, now boldly

took up his residence in his own mansion. There, as he denied himself to every one, he enjoyed the solitude that he wished; and, as the capture of the spy and traitor by himself alone, would not now enable him to impose certain tyrannical terms upon the Bacuissart family, among which the restoration of his ward was to have been the most prominent, he set himself assiduously to work to make the capture publicly.

To effect this, he provided himself with the assistance of two athletic and discharged gamekeepers, of very bad characters, and, having through some influence he possessed, got them sworn in among the London police, he was determined, with them, to scour every acre of ground for twenty miles around both Astell House and Trestletree Hall. The acerbity of his feelings towards the family of our hero was, by no means, softened when he read the aggravated account that Mrs. Dredgely had forwarded to him of what she was pleased to term the

abduction of Miss Belmont from her protection. She magnified her own resistance, and vilified, in the choicest terms, Captain Oliphant and Mr. Underdown; and, as her powers of abuse were comprehensive, she also condescended to include Peter Drivel in her maledictions. She thus hoped, by feeding one side of his heart with hate, shortly to occupy the other with love for herself. To prepare that tough piece of tanned leather for the reception of the latter, she exhausted every term of devotion to his interests and person with which her powers of oratory supplied her. To all this, there were added a few hints as to the levity of Miss Belmont's general conduct, and every expression that she could remember that lady to have used that would at all tend to exasperate Mr. Rubasore. They made, by no means, a small vocabulary, comprising almost every word of contempt. Mr. Rubasore could not fully comprehend all this; he began, however, to feel that his plump cousin had been

mixed up in the ill-usage that he had himself received, and, therefore, she had some feelings in common, some sympathy with him.

On opening the letters of the attorney, he found everything that Mrs. Dredgely had stated there fully corroborated, and much eloquence bestowed on the zeal and devotion of that prudent lady. He was rather startled at the enormous expenses in which he had involved himself, but, just now, he knew that it would be only a source of uneasiness to him to go into that vexatious item. So, determining to be magnificent, he gave way to all his better feelings, and impelled by them, he sat down and wrote the following letter to Mrs. Dredgely.

"DEAR MADAM AND COUSIN,

"I thank you, with all the energies of a heart overflowing with gratitude, for the zeal that you have displayed in my interests, and though that zeal proved ineffectual to serve them, believe me, as it is fully appreciated, it

shall not go unrewarded. Of course, as I have been so shamefully deprived of my legal authority over Miss Belmont, your future residence at Jaspar Hall must be at your own risk and expense, for it is now competent to the present intrusive guardians of Miss Belmont to bring in a bill against you for board and lodging for every day which you remain where you are —and compel you to pay it also—and from the vindictive nature of these people, and the hate that they bear to me and mine, I have no doubt that they will do so.

"As I find, by the letters of Mr. Sharpus, that you have been paid for your services up to the very moment when my ward was taken from me, you have no further demand on me; notwithstanding which, as you must remove immediately, and in testimony of what is due to your anxiety for my interests, I enclose you, with my prayers for your happiness, this half of a one pound note, No. 17,865; the other half will be forwarded to you wherever you may be

when you have removed. This information you must convey to me by letter, post paid. Not that I object to paying the postage of a letter from one so nearly related to me, but I may be from home at the time when it may arrive, and the general orders of my establishment are, never to receive a letter, the postage of which is not paid. I think that you had better again board with the asthmatic widow of the late tobacconist, in St. Bartholomew's Close. The terms are not high, and the old lady will not probably last long; and if, you are duly attentive, you will have every reasonable hopes of a legacy.

"My cousin and madam, your mention of coming here and keeping my house is preposterous. I never keep house; and, as it is, I have much trouble to preserve my character in this calumnious neighbourhood. Miss Rosa is living at Trestletree Hall, with a parcel of ladies, and that oily serpent, Underdown. She looks, I am sorry to observe, in high health and very

happy. But it won't last, madam, I tell you it won't last.

"You will excuse my having put you to the expense of the postage for this, as really, after every attempt, I have failed to get a frank,

"Believe me to be,

"Your loving relation,

"REUBEN RUBASORE."

The munificent gift in this munificent letter, making it a double one, cost the fair receiver—it having first to go to London, and then nearly to the Land's-end—exactly five shillings. Mrs. Dredgely read it with the utmost surprise; such a profundity of meanness even she could not comprehend.

"Let me see," said she, gnashing her teeth with rage, "what will be the ultimate value of this loving relation's bounty. As from hence I start not, and Rosa, I am sure, will not drive me, the two letters that convey the two halves will cost me ten shillings; and my single

letter to acknowledge the receipt of the first half, and my letter of thanks for the second, will cost me five more. The shabby old hunks! And I the nearest relative that he has living, excepting his heir, whom he hates worse than the thoughts of his own coffin. He to think of marrying Miss Rosa—marry him to the worms that are hungry for his dried-up carcass!"

Now this woman was a wicked woman, but her wickedness sprang from the weakness of her intellect. Had fortune treated her kindly, she would have acted her part in life worthily. She loved happiness for herself, and loved to promote it in others; but she could not stand the temptations that want and poverty flung in her path: she had been too delicately nurtured. People of this weak-minded description, though they love nothing strongly but their own welfare, always hate those who interfere with, and mar it, most potently. Mrs. Dredgely, just now, found herself in this predicament of detestation towards Mr. Rubasore. She record-

ed her everlasting hate to him in an impious prayer. She went down upon her knees, and she prayed to the Disposer of all blessings, that "she might speedily marry this man in order to be a curse to him; that she might live to make him swallow his insulting gift; that she might administer it to him on his death-bed, in his medicine, or in his gruel; and then, telling him of it, hasten the death of the miser."

Having prayed to this effect, she carefully put by the part of the note and wrote to him, whom she looked upon as her future husband, a letter full of humility, submission, gratitude, and cajolery. The bait took; he pronounced her to be the most exemplary of women, and began fervently to wish that she had Rosa's fortune, in order that she might possess herself of Rosa's place in his house and—I suppose we must call it—heart.

Mrs. Dredgely was not deceived in her speculations. Miss Belmont, with the full concurrence of Mr. Underdown, wrote to her most

kindly, requesting her to remain at Jaspar Hall so long as it suited her convenience, and by no means to stint herself of any of the luxuries to which she had been accustomed, and to consider herself as entitled to receive until she, Rosa, had attained her majority, the usual stipend that, as her *gouvernante*, she had been accustomed to enjoy.

There was balm in all this to her wounded pride, and an antidote to her fears of the asthmatic widow, the miserable fare, the low associations, and the confined atmosphere of St. Bartholomew's-close. For all this, she sent a much less florid letter of thanks than was that which she returned for Mr. Rubasore's pitiful gift and shabby selfishness of conduct. In her letter to Miss Belmont, her language was simple, quiet, and to the purpose. In her epistle to her relation, every sentence was strained to express the most unbounded love, the most exhaustless gratitude, and the most

unqualified subserviency. When people read letters, let them think on Mrs. Dredgely's correspondence.

CHAPTER VIII.

"And if the glorious saints cease not to know
Their wretched friends who fight with life below,
With me thy spirit ever shall abide,
Only more pure and rarified."

OLD POET.

On the evening of the day in which Mr. Rubasore was held to bail, an unusual gloom brooded over the party at Trestletree Hall; and, though it consisted of five generally lively ladies, their taciturnity would not have disgraced a Quaker's meeting.

A mystery of an unpleasant nature is usually as favourable to silence, as a wonder is to talkativeness. Mr. Rubasore had been permitted to remain in the error of believing that

the blow that had stunned him was inflicted by the hand of Rebecca; and the vigour of that hand he imputed to the robust and out-of-doors life that she had been, so unfemininely, permitted to lead. All the servants remained nearly in the same error as was Mr. Rubasore; but they, when they made their appearance, having seen her standing over him, with a dagger in her hand, imagined that she had struck him on the head with its hilt.

Mr. Underdown had hitherto forborne questioning the headstrong young lady, as he well knew, by long experience, that the least assumption of authority, on his part, would annihilate the little that he really possessed over her. This first event of the real romance of life—at least of a sort approaching to the terrible—had completely demonstrated how little of a heroine Miss Belmont was. There had been a succession of tremors all day; and her frequent attempts at mirth were either whimsically lugubrious, or actually hysterical.

On the contrary, Rebecca was unusually sedate and composed. Seated, she sate more erect: walking, her carriage was almost queenly. She, too, had been unusually silent throughout the day; and the few remarks that she had made were peculiarly sensible, laconic, and to the point. Her judgment was evidently working upon those events, which all the other ladies had subjected to the ordeal of their imaginations.

Her aunt Matilda was childishly anxious to know where Rebecca had put the dagger, and if there was any blood on it. Rebecca begged to satisfy her on both points: firstly, that it was safe: and, secondly, as far as she knew, that it was guiltless of human or any other blood.

But where did she get it? How came she by it?

That she was endeavouring to discover.

"Let us have music," said Mr. Underdown.

Music was attempted; and the attempt proved that Miss Oliphant, "for that night only," as they say in the play-bills, sang out of tune; and that if she, also for that night only, played detestably upon the guitar, she acquitted herself still worse upon the harp. Rebecca looked upon all these attempts with something not very distant from a dignified contempt.

Rosa, half in tears, left the harp, and came and seated herself near Rebecca.

"I never played worse," said she.

"My dear Rosa, you played miserably indeed."

"The instrument is shockingly out of tune."

"No, no; I will not have my harp thus slandered. It is you that are unstrung. Let me convince you I will play over to you the last lesson that you taught me. As my good papa says, 'Mark ye me!' and then blame the tone of my harp if you can."

She rose, and played the simple air. It was certainly but a beginner's lesson; but it was

executed with a firm touch, and an exquisite judgment. The company were astonished.

"I have vindicated my poor harp," said she, in an equable voice, as she placed herself again near Miss Belmont.

"And yourself, too," said the latter, drawing more closely to her, "as a complete heroine; and last night you fought for your life with a ruffian."

"Not exactly, my Rosa. But dare you," she continued, in a whisper, and fondly leaning upon her shoulder; "dare you, Rosa, when the family have retired, go with me, and search in the preserve for that ruffian."

The intrepid proposition almost overpowered Miss Belmont. She clasped Rebecca round the neck, and kissed her passionately.

"O yes; I will go with you," said she; "but, Rebecca, it will kill me."

She uttered these words so loudly, that they were partly overheard by Mr. Underdown.

"Go! go where?—what's all this talking about killing, girls?" said he, rather hastily, for him.

"Oh," said Rebecca, "I only invited Rosa to go with me, and look for a ghost. As she thinks it will kill her, I retract my invitation. Are there ghosts, dear Mr. Underdown?" she continued, with her sweetest smile; and, when she chose, Rebecca could smile sweetly indeed.

"If we had Captain Dribble here," (meaning, gentle reader, my humble self,) "he would tell you that he had positively seen one. For myself, candidly, I would not believe that I saw a ghost, if one actually stood before my eyes, and I viewed it as distinctly as I view you. I would rather believe that my own nervous system was disordered, than that the natural and healthful chain of cause and effect was destroyed, in order to produce a miracle. It is against the laws of nature, that the forms, or rather the effigies, of the dead should arise;

or that the sensations, to which the sight of the living give rise, should appear before us, where the living are not. Now these pretended ghosts have but seldom any adequate cause, frequently none at all, for their appearance. And do you not perceive, my dear ladies, that a miracle is a blot upon, an irregularity in the glorious scheme of the Omniscient; an after-thought—a something to be amended or provided for, that was not foreseen. What, think you, could justify such an extreme measure as a miracle? The finding a pot of money; the assuring of a friend that his friend is dead; or that the living one would not survive—if it were necessary these things should be known, the knowledge of them would have been provided for by Him in whose hands is providence—provided for by natural causes. No, no, my sweet ladies, there are no ghosts, believe me, but what we make of ourselves, as we have been doing to-night, by banishing from ourselves all hilarity and good spirits. Come, now for a

game at romps; and let us be ghosts no more."

But this playful attempt did not answer; none moved from their places. It is true, the good man rose; but, seeing how little he was seconded, he quietly reseated himself.

"I do most heartily wish there were ghosts," said Rebecca, very deliberately. A ghost of a shriek attended this avowal, from more than one of the company.

"Why, my beloved child? It is a strange wish," said Mr. Underdown.

"Because I suppose it would be nothing wrong in a ghost to instigate to crime."

"The question is too subtle for me to answer. I must first know the nature of a ghost, by what laws it is governed, and to whom it is amenable. As no one will ever be able to answer my question, so shall I never be able to answer yours. However, I have taken care that if bolts and bars and locks and chains can keep out evil spirits, you are quite safe from

any intrusion, for I have had all the fastenings of the doors and windows doubled."

The ladies thanked him, all but Rebecca. She, however, expressed no disapprobation. She shortly after rose, and said—

"Well, Mr. Underdown, even you must allow that the most unyielding scepticism cannot prevent ghosts of all descriptions from entering into the region of dreams. Thither will I go, and seek for some; so a good night to you all."

"How Rebecca is altered!" exclaimed Miss Matilda, with a shudder.

As Rebecca kissed Mr. Underdown, in his turn—a habit that she did not seem at all inclined to relinquish—he whispered into her ear—

"Won't my dear Becky tell me to-morrow the history of the poignard?"

"I will conceal nothing from you, my more than father; but be not over-anxious. I have almost nothing to reveal. God bless you!"

"And you too, my beloved child."

Shortly after, the rest of the party broke up, and each retired to his or her respective sleeping apartment.

CHAPTER VII.

"Love, in her sunny eyes does basking play,
Love walks the pleasant mazes of her hair,
Love does, on both her lips for ever stray,
And sows and reaps a thousand kisses there
Her heart is Love's chaste altar."

OLD POEM

IT was nearly midnight, and the extensive buildings that constituted Trestletree Hall lay in alternate light and shadow; for the moon was looking down upon it, in all her splendour, from her loftiest stance in the heavens. Wherever her beams uninterruptedly revelled, there objects could be distinctly discerned, even at a considerable distance. Rebecca had neither retired to her bed, nor made any preparations for it. She was in her full dinner-dress; not dressed

as was lately her wont, in the hoydenish style of that of an overgrown child, but elaborately, as a young lady of rank and wealth, and fast approaching womanhood, should be. Though she was always lovely, refinement seemed to have thrown the last touching grace over her. So improved was she, that her own father would not have known her, had her face been turned from him.

The thought that haunted her like an evil demon, and made her regardless of rest, was that of the wild and desperate-looking tall young man, who had so supernaturally obeyed her will, and thrust the instrument of death into her hand. That he was still hovering about the grounds was her strong presentiment; and, had not her pride quelled the rising idea, she had felt that, by some mysterious chain, his fate was linked with hers.

I have before said, that she had retired to her room at an early hour. Now this room was on what is usually called the first floor, and

looked over the lawn at the back of the mansion. To every window on this side of the house, and on this floor, there was a light, but tolerably capacious, iron balcony. Rebecca's window was nearly in the centre of the rest, and commanded a complete view of the moonlit lawn and the tufts of trees that ornamented the park beyond it. To the right lay the thick preserve of which we have lately spoken.

To resume: it was nearly midnight, and Rebecca was sitting at a small or-molu table, with the naked dagger before her—now straining her eyes upon the landscape, now attentively examining the blade that gleamed in the moonbeam before her—making altogether as pretty a Radcliffean picture as any reader of romance might wish. As she was thus employed, she heard three or four faint knocks at the door of the chamber. Rebecca was surprised, but not the least unnerved. She sprang upon her feet, and, taking the weapon in her hand, exclaimed almost audibly, "Surely this intruder dare not

invade the house; however, he has himself armed me against him." As there were two wax candles burning before her looking-glass at her toilet, and the moonlight was also pouring all its effulgence in at the window, the room was well illuminated.

To the demand of who knocked, she immediately recognised the voice of Rosa; the door was instantly opened, the dagger flashed in Miss Belmont's eyes, and the next moment she lay almost insensible in the arms of her friend.

At length, when she was a little revived, she exclaimed, "Dear, dear Rebecca, this is too horrible!"

"What is too horrible, my poor trembling friend? I think that my room looks very light and comfortable, even elegant."

"But to see you, Rosa, at midnight, standing with a dreadful dagger in your hand."

"O, fancy it a carving-knife! Look at it—handle it; it is neither so large, and, with the exception of the point, not by any means so

sharp, as that very necessary instrument for dining. Come, come, this is silly."

"But all this seems to me like a beginning of one of those wonderful tales of horror that I once was so fond of reading, and in which, when I was foolish, I so often sighed to act. Now it is coming on really, I am dying with terror. Weak creature that I am, ever to have supposed that I was a heroine."

"I never read a book of the sort, Rosa, and there is nothing wonderful going forward, but, I fear me greatly, something very distressing. I have not a bit of the heroine in me; I hate all display; I wish only to do right, and extend what good I can to all that suffer. Much out-door exercise, a robust constitution, and, perhaps, something of the intrepidity that I inherit from my father, have given me that strength of nerve that enables me to look upon events in the common-sense point of view. O my Rosa, let me teach you to do the same! It will be some, and, believe me, no small return for all

that you are teaching me; and then, what a dear, what a useful friend you might be to me!"

Miss Belmont, much re-assured, promised everything, and then Rebecca related to her all that had passed in the preserve, which, till that moment, she had kept entirely to herself. This short narrative was a sore trial to Miss Belmont's new-born fortitude, but she seemed to derive strength of mind from clinging the more closely to our termagant.

"Now you perceive, Rosa, how rapidly events are crowding on. The man who saved me from the dastard violence of that fellow Rubasore—that blow shall be washed away in blood—What have I said? God forgive me! I pardon the indignity—I do pardon it; yet when I remember it, it makes me less than woman—but I forgive it, from the very heart that aches at it, for it is my glory, Rosa, wild as I am thought, to live by the laws, not of chivalry, but by those of Christianity."

"It was a coward's blow, but it was well and promptly avenged."

" You see the deep blue stain of it is on my forehead still; surely I may rejoice that the man was cleverly struck to the earth."

" You may; who, think you, was he?"

" Ay, dear Rosa, that is the great tormenting question. It could not have been Augustus, because the sepulchral sea gives not up its dead before the monumental marble, or the deep grave of the churchyard."

" Do not talk so,—O my Rebecca."

" Why not? accustom yourself to view the depth and the breadth of these things, and you will find them but little when measured against our own immortality. Dear, good Underdown taught me this. Learn also to be familiar with these thoughts, and your mind will through them grow strong. It could not have been Augustus, for he was very beautiful to look upon, and his face always oval—now, the features of this man were long and haggard, and his face disfigured with much hair. It could not have been Augustus, for this man counselled me

to murder. O no, no, no! it could not have been Augustus, for Rubasore says that the person whom he was hunting had been guilty of some dreadful crime—and, that the man that rescued me is the fugitive from justice, is too apparent."

"Do you really think so?"

"There can be no doubt of it. Rosa, every good feeling of my heart prompts me to believe well of the outcast. I have great joy and hope of him, from the persecution of Rubasore—he could not be very bad, and have that man his enemy."

"How I detest that Reuben Rubasore!"

"Yet, Rosa, listen to me with all your deepest love. Yesternight, he, the flier from the laws, spoke one word to me—the tone—O there was at once rapture and misery to me in the tone of it—it was so like to that of him who is in heaven."

"Of Augustus?"

"Of that very saint."

"Were there any doubts of his actual death?"

"None, save but what the most insane love prompted. He evidently, whoever he may be, looks to me for protection, and knows well every peculiarity of these grounds. At first, I thought it was that mad little Daniel Danvers, who had got in some scrape, and, leaving his ship, fled to me for protection—that Danvers, who, I told you before, deserted to bring to his mother that last sad letter of poor Augustus."

"Yes, yes; it was he—I am sure of it. I like that little fellow amazingly—let us find him out, and conceal him. We'll make your father set everything right for him—won't we?"

"Good girl! But I must undeceive you. Had it been he, who should have dared to harm one hair of his head? Alas, alas! it was not he—for I have again seen the fugitive to-night—*he has spoken to me.*"

"Gracious heavens! May God give us strength to do right!"

"Amen, amen! And this, my Rosa, was the manner of it. This blow upon my forehead gave me an intolerable head-ache—of that I scorned to complain—but my mind was also much disturbed, and, to confess the truth, I rather expected something of the sort. So I sate at the window and watched the dark foliage of that preserve; I did not watch in vain. Emerging by a wicket that is known but to a few even of our establishment, the same tall man strode over the lawn, and came and placed himself directly under the balcony of this window. Yes, I trembled! At every step, his distant feet, though I heard not his tread, seemed to knock distinctly at my heart. I moved not—I spoke not—my eyes seemed bursting with the intensity of my wish to behold him. It was *not* the person of Augustus."

"Go on, or I shall die, for I can scarcely breathe."

" It was not the person of Augustus—but it was, Rosa, it was—his voice. I hesitated no more. Had that man appeared to me ironed as the malefactor, there was a charm in the tone of that voice that would have made me greet him—even on the scaffold."

" O, what said he?"

" He called me gently by my name; he merely said, 'Rebecca.' I rushed into the balcony—I stood confessed before him—I looked down upon him in amazement. I was so bewildered that the dark-brown man beneath me should so have possessed himself with the voice of Augustus, that I could not speak. He surveyed me for a moment, and then exclaimed in the bitterest anguish, 'Wretch that I am, it is not she. Lady, betray me not.' In these words, I recognised the voice of Augustus no more. Yet even then would I have spoken to assure him that he was not deceived in me; to thank him for his gallant rescue; but the barking of the house-mastiff, and the rattling of his chain,

scared him away; he fled to the middle of the lawn, and sank down upon the grass. Come to the window, Rosa, he is there—in the aftermath. You see there the dark spot, where the moonlight breaks—he tore his hair as he rushed from me—he is evidently ill. The earth is cold, and mark you, how plentifully the dews are falling—perhaps he is starving! O my God, so near to us, Rosa, so near, and we cannot help him; help him who resented, who avenged the insulting blow—him who can speak like dear Augustus!"

"But we will, Rebecca; I feel very strong now. Let us call Mr. Underdown. Let us advise with him."

"O no, no, no, he is a man too just and upright. Were it his own father that came under the ban of the law, he would give him up."

"Could you trust no servant?"

"None; there is a reward of one hundred pounds offered for his apprehension. We are not thief-takers. What shall we do? Must we see the man perish there before our eyes?"

"It would be too horrible; and if, by some miracle, it really were Augustus! Remember, Rebecca, that you have so changed that this person, whose intention, is is evident, was to throw himself on your protection, knew you not again. What change might not time and sufferings have worked upon your Augustus?"

"For the first time I feel faint, Rosa. Were he deeply dyed in murder, as was Cain, I will converse with him—I will know all—the worst. Rosa, support me through this trial. Go into the balcony, and wave your handkerchief. Sleep there he cannot; and surely he is not yet dead."

In the torture of suspense, Rebecca seated herself at the window within the room, whilst her friend, half-terror, half-joy at the excitement of the adventure, stood forth at the balcony, and placing herself in an attitude, perhaps a little studied, commenced waving to and fro her white handkerchief. It was very fortunate that all the rest of the household were buried

in the deepest repose. This graceful exercise may, despite of the interesting attitudes that it affords, grow, in time, tedious, provided that it produces no effect. Miss Belmont had almost tired of it, and was on the point of leaving it off, at least for a space, when the man rose partly up, and waving his hand backwards and forwards several times, again dropped down nearly out of sight."

"He mistrusts us, Rosa," said Rebecca, who had anxiously watched these proceedings, "but you must persevere." She did so; and, with a hesitating step, the long and strenuously-invited gentleman, with a gait of the most becoming diffidence, approached. Rosa's fears increased as he gradually decreased his distance from the balcony, and, when he had arrived directly under it, she fairly retreated within the room.

Rebecca had, as yet, proved herself equal to any emergency. She trembled; but, taking her friend by the hand, led her with her outside

the window. A low and faltering voice uttered from below—

"Ladies, you will not betray me."

"Assuredly not, stranger," said Rebecca, in a low tone.

"I bless your voice. Is it not Rebecca Bacuissart who speaks to me?"

"It is. To whom am I speaking? Your voice sounds strangely to me, yet your person I know not."

"I bring you news from Augustus Astell."

"You are Augustus!" This was said in the most unnatural voice that could assail the ear: it sounded like a far-off echo.

"Lady, I am a proclaimed traitor, and men have sworn to me as a murderer? Could Augustus be such?"

"Never; but why stand you trembling there? What happiness it would now be for me to shriek! Come to me—come to my arms—my beloved! Augustus, you must be very cold."

"I am weak, and cannot. Look down upon me, Rebecca, and let me draw life and strength from your countenance. Now again I see my long-lost sister—my love! Believe me, I am very happy; they may take me now. Dolt that I was not to know you, but your dress deceived me."

"These are idle words, Augustus. Mock me not—I cannot speak for tears—I will hear nothing from you but what you murmur on my bosom. Think you, Augustus, that I can see or hear or do anything, until you have embraced me. Come, come!"

And she here, with extended arms, leaned so far over the railing, that, had it not been for the sustaining hand of Rosa, she would have fallen into his.

"What will become of me?" said the despairing youth. "I am encompassed on every side. All wickedness is arrayed against me; and I am beset around by perjurers. Where, Rebecca, where shall I find an asylum?"

"Hush, Augustus! I am powerful, all pow-

erful, in my love to you; I will protect you. But speak lower, for your life. Hah! there is the baying of that unlucky dog."

"I will go and silence him in a moment."

"You shall not leave me, Augustus; no, no, let him bay on. Lift up your hand, dearest; let me but touch the end of your finger. Miserable me, I cannot reach it! Ah, Rosa, cannot you assist me, with your great learning, to get this true knight into his lady's chamber. There is no harm in it—Rebecca tells you so; for have we not been betrothed, my Augustus, even when we were little ones? Who that knew me did not call me your little wife?"

"Were I to live a thousand years, none other would I call by that name."

"You hear how faithful he is, Rosa, and yet you assist him not; he will be taken—my God, he will be taken!"

The barking of the dog became now so incessant and so loud, that every moment it

might be expected that some of the household would be alarmed. In fact, many of them were; but none chose to make the first move to inquire into the cause. Augustus Astell now, with a swift pace, went near the part of the premises where the dog was tied up, and, by a few words, pacified him. The terror of the ladies, during his short absence, was extreme; he returned, however, almost immediately.

"My dear Becky, the dog knew me, and, like you, is faithful to me."

"The animal is worthier than I. Alas! I am only *faithful* to you; I knew you not."

"Come, come, you must not welcome your poor wanderer with self-reproaches. How is my dear mother?"

"Well, why well. Let us now only talk of ourselves. Rosa, you are my dear friend; and Augustus is there still, in the cold and unwholesome moonlight."

"I have read," said Rosa, "in the history of

the loves of Roswaldina and the knight of the silver scales, that, after his clandestine espousals with that lady, she would tie large knots in the bridal sheets, and, lowering them down from the turret-window——"

"Silly, silly girl, and to lose all this time."

In a few minutes, by means somewhat similar, Augustus was in the bed-room, and Rebecca, almost mad with joy, in his arms.

Now, I know that the whole of these proceedings were dreadfully improper. They ought to be stigmatised with the severest censure that ever tipped with bitterness the tongue of virtuous virgin who has passed the wane; yet, what is the most singular, is, that this glaring impropriety, which ought, so naturally, to horrify the rest of the world, never appeared to the perpetrators of it any impropriety at all. The ladies thought only of saving a person, in whom they took a profound interest, from the ignominy of a public prison, an arraignment for treason and murder, and, perhaps, an unjust condemnation

to death. All these dangers might not really exist; but, as they fully believed that they did, they acted thus improperly—and could not help it. I really don't know whether their conduct ought to be imitated or not; being so old a man, I am past being able to judge of these nice distinctions.

A man cannot wholly live upon caresses; the attempt so to do would be almost as unpleasant as to be obliged to live wholly without them. After many expressions of his devoted gratitude, both to God and to the ladies, Rebecca in particular, and protestations of never-dying affection to his little wife, Augustus did not hesitate to confess that he was nearly famished and very tired. Rosa was sent down to perform the unromantic office of plundering the pantry and filching the wine from the decanters on the side-board, all of which she did as naturally and as cleverly as if she had been born to the office

There was but little said about the missing

provisions next morning, as, in the negligent economy of Trestletree Hall, similar occurrences were not unfrequent.

Great was the pleasure of these rash ladies at beholding that hungry young nobleman satisfy his very plebeian appetite, having done which, he gave such unequivocal symptoms of sleepiness, that, after an ardent exchange of blessings, the ladies abandoned the bed and the room to the wearied gentleman, and Rebecca went and slept—a very, very happy girl—with her Rosa, who was almost as happy, but a little surprised at the homeliness of the appearance of the much-praised Augustus.

CHAPTER IX.

"Go, bid the needle his dear north forsake,
To which, with trembling reverence, it doth bend;
Go, bid the stones a journey upwards take,
Go bid th' ambitious flames no more ascend:
And when these false to their own motions prove,
Then shall I cease, thee, thee alone, to love."

COWLEY.

AT the earliest dawn Rebecca was up and dressed, and many were the kind caresses that she had to bestow upon her companion, ere she could impart that wakefulness to her which was necessary to bring to the conference they had to hold, upon what was next to be done with the wanderer imprisoned in the bed-room.

The young heiress was all activity and energy; whilst Miss Belmont's morning reflections told her that they had committed a

very rash step, and one that would go far to compromise their reputations. For Rebecca's sake, she repented not of what they had done; yet the alarm that pervaded her, having thrown a benumbing influence over her faculties, made her incapable of advising, and action irksome to her. Her only wish, now, was to share the responsibility with Mr. Underdown, or, at least, with either of the elder ladies of the household, Mrs. Oliphant, or her not exceedingly wise sister, Miss Matilda Bacuissart. To neither of these propositions would her friend listen for a moment.

However, the bird in the cage must not only be concealed effectually, but also fed. This was an embarrassing dilemma; but if young ladies will lock young gentlemen up in their bed-rooms, they must not suppose that they are making a bed of roses for themselves.

Eight o'clock had arrived, and the family were all astir, and yet nothing was concluded upon.

"You must go and see, my Rosebud, if dear Augustus be awake. You know it won't do for me to be seen knocking at the outside of my own bed-room door, whilst I am supposed to be comfortably within."

"I should think not," said Rosa, taking the key, for they had turned the lock upon him. "Well, and if his lordship is awake, what shall I say to him?"

"Unlock the door quietly, give him my love and the key, and tell him we will bring him up breakfast directly."

"I am curious to know how, my dear Becky."

"O that's to be thought of. We'll manage it, no doubt."

Miss Belmont went to the room door, and returned with looks of dismay.

"What in heaven has happened, Rosa?"

"Happened! The young man is snoring like a band of ill-played kettle-drums, and nothing less than a sledge-hammer will awaken him.

I have already knocked the skin off my knuckles. Do all men make this horrid noise when they sleep? Heigho! Positively, my dear, he will alarm the house."

"Rosa, you are quite disagreeable this morning. Sweet, gentle Augustus! What a severe cold in the head he must have!"

"At all events, he cannot have a very guilty conscience. He should be made captain of the seven snorers—I beg pardon—sleepers."

"Ah, you may say anything, Rosa, if you will but assist us."

"Well, my little blue-eyed sapience, what would you have me do?"

"Rosa, you must feign sickness; you must keep your room—you must even go to bed again; but you must be afflicted with a craving, a tremendous appetite—a longing for beefsteaks and pots of coffee. It will be my duty to breakfast with you—I am myself excessively hungry. Go to bed—there's a love. I will go down and report how ill you are."

"I will do it—yes—certainly; but only remember what a bad actress I am. Do let us make Mr. Underdown a party to all this; or else I may have to keep my bed for a week, and my reputation for an intolerable eater the rest of my life. Is this Augustus of yours as great at swallowing as he is at snoring?"

"Come, Rosa, my dearest, to bed with you."

"And the sun shining so brightly!"

Rebecca descended, and joined the rest of the family in the breakfast-parlour. Contrary to her custom of bursting in and running round with a face of joy to salute every one, she attempted to mask her emotions by a stateliness of deportment and a constrained politeness, not quite natural to her. She looked scrutinisingly into every face, but the examination did not add to her sources of alarm. The countenance of the person whom she most feared betrayed unusual pleasure and satisfaction.

After the usual salutations had been exchanged, Mr. Underdown said kindly to Re-

becca, "My beauty, this is the first time that you are last."

Peter Drivel, who was just then in attendance, pricked up his ears like an old charger at the sound of the trumpet; however, he had the discretion to clap his hand upon his mouth, and thus stop the utterance of his absurdity. O that punsters had more of Peter's wisdom!

"Did you hear the deep baying of Carlo last night, Rebecca? Your window looks out upon the lawn."

"I sleep soundly," was the scarcely articulate reply, the carnation of her face exceeding the brilliancy of the damask-rose.

"I can easily believe you, Rebecca, for, when I passed your room-door, not a quarter of an hour ago, I heard some of the most unsophisticated snoring that ever chorussed sleep. But where, my dear, is Rosa? Does she sleep soundly too?"

This last question afforded Rebecca a little relief; for, before, she felt so confused, that she

could not very well tell whether it were herself or the room that was turning round. She believed that one or the other was spinning like a teetotum.

"I am very sorry to tell you that Rosa is very much indisposed, and, after rising this morning, I compelled her to go to bed again. I have promised to breakfast and spend the rest of the day with her."

At this announcement, the rest of the ladies were ready clamorously to rush up-stairs, in order to administer to the patient quiet and consolation. This Rebecca opposed, saying that she was sure that, just now, Miss Belmont would prefer being left alone.

Mr. Underdown said very drily—and Rebecca thought rather suspiciously—that "he was sure she would;" and thus, influenced by his authority, the ladies resumed their seats. He then quietly asked them if they had heard the news. This excited their utmost attention. He then read a letter from the old Commodore, dated

from town, in which he said that he was sorry that he should be detained, perhaps for another week, on very important private business. He sent his love and his blessing to Rebecca—indeed, it was a very charming and peace-breathing letter, considering who was its writer. Mr. Underdown, however, did not read the whole of it. Then there were the official accounts of his recent splendid victory to be read, and the various comments to be made and listened to upon it; so that a full half-hour was consumed, and poor Miss Belmont left, as Peter would have said, embedded in suspense and anxiety.

Poor Rebecca was the only person present who seemed not fully to enter into the triumphant feelings of the rest of the party; and, when Mrs. Oliphant exclaimed, " How happy must now be my brother Octavius!" she sighed and said, " Would to heaven he were here! I could make him happier than could a thousand victories."

"Hey day!" cried out Mr. Underdown, "our heroine speaks in parables. Becky, Becky, it is a dangerous style of talking. O Rebecca, look at your linnet; we should never neglect or *endanger* our captives—especially when they are *willing ones.*"

The poor girl trembled from head to foot, as she went to tend her bird; and, though she did not say so, she thought that her reprover could himself speak in mysteries tremendously. Could he suspect anything? she asked herself, and grew sick at heart at the question.

Whilst the rest of the company were nearly wild with joy, at the news that they had just heard, and with the hopes of seeing their relatives, Sir Octavius and Captain Oliphant, Rebecca sate silent, perplexed, and absent. She appeared to have lost her consciousness of everything around her; she did not even see the mingled glances of pity and approval that Mr. Underdown, from time to time, cast upon

her. At length, he ordered a most substantial breakfast to be prepared, and taken up to the sick lady's room; saying, to the astonishment of every one, that he would take the opportunity of himself paying her a visit, if Miss Belmont had no objection. This certainly aroused Rebecca; but she was mute with alarm.

"Go, my dear Rebecca, and give my regards and compliments to Miss Belmont; and tell her, that if she does not object to an old man like myself, who has also had much practice in medicine, visiting her, as her physician, I will do myself the honour to prescribe for her, until we get other and better advice. Go; and return to me immediately. Rebecca, mark me—the case may be *dangerous*."

Roused by the last word, she flew up into Rosa's room, who, hearing somebody coming up-stairs, tumbled into her bed as quickly as she could, with her clothes on. When the almost breathless Rebecca had delivered Mr.

Underdown's message, Miss Belmont was almost convulsed with laughter.

"Anything in the world that I can do for you, I will. But how, in the name of all that's difficult, am I to look pale and ugly? And your lover locked up in the next room, too. There—thick as are the party walls, I vow and declare I think I hear him snoring still. Really, this is too ridiculous."

"Do not thus sport with my misery. Betray us both—but do not mock us."

"My sweet child, I will not. Send up my doctor-guardian. I will turn my face to the wall, and look as pale and with as little life in me, as a boiled parsnip—if I can. Now, go down, and bring the good man up."

She returned, afterwards, with Mr. Underdown and an exceedingly substantially furnished breakfast-tray. The servant who bore it was ordered to remain. During all this time, Rebecca, with her eyes filled with tears, looked most imploringly and inquiringly into the face

of the quiet gentleman; and every moment the words, "You know all?" trembled upon her lips.

If Mr. Underdown knew or suspected anything, he kept his secret and his gravity admirably. He approached the bed of the supposed patient with due decorum. He hemmed, as a physician should hem who is overflowing with too much wisdom: he took the wrist, and counted the pulsations, by the means of his repeater, with the earnestness of the most profound attention. He then sighed, and shook his head most ominously.

"Ah!" said he, "a galloping pulse. I know the symptoms—you need not speak. Now, dear Miss Belmont, I prescribe for you the most perfect quiet. I know the disease well—it is very common in the West Indies. There is a stroke of the moon in this case—a much more dangerous disease than a stroke of the sun. Moonlight, under some circumstances, is very dangerous."

At this moment, the much amused Rosa could not help giggling most audibly under the bed-clothes. Mr. Underdown started, and thus continued. "Ah, there it is; a bad symptom, a very dangerous symptom in this particular disease, those spasms in the throat. We must have the most perfect quiet. This fever has come upon her through an ill-advised exposure to the moonlight and the midnight dews—perhaps our poor Rosa has caught this blight upon her by standing at your balcony."

"Dear Horace, pity us, save us; you know all," said the too much agitated Rebecca.

"Miss Bacuissart, what mean you?" looking angry and stern. "I do pity Miss Belmont, and I feel assured, with a little confinement to her room, and quiet, that I can save her. But I know nothing but what I see. This is a case in which the greatest danger lies in *surmising*. Jenny, you may go down, but mind, it is my positive orders that this part of the house be left quite quiet, and that no one presume

to come up this staircase, or pass along these passages. Miss Rebecca will remain and nurse our dear patient—will you not, my child?"

"O most gladly."

"Then go, Jenny, and tell my groom to saddle the bay mare, and ride over for Doctor Ginningham with all speed. I will send up some effervescing draughts directly, which you will administer to the patient when she feels thirsty. Indeed, I will send up my little medicine-chest."

Having said this, Mr. Underdown followed the servant downstairs, and went and announced that Miss Belmont had incautiously, and when not sufficiently wrapped up, exposed herself to the moonlight dews, and that the consequence was, she was now labouring under a violent access of fever. He interdicted all visiting, and announced the intention of Rebecca to be her only and constant nurse.

The order of "not at home" to any one who called, excepting the doctor, was strictly en-

forced; the severity of the illness was believed throughout the household, and the central division of the upper apartments left in the most profound solitude. In due time, Doctor Ginningham, attended by his silent apothecary, made their appearance, and were closeted, not with the patient, but with Mr. Underdown. Afterwards, the medical gentlemen paid their respects to the ladies, and the learned doctor took the opportunity to mention that the case was a most dangerous case, and that the patient should be visited by no one until the *crisis* was over. He gave, also, most alarming hints respecting infection, and praised the devotedness of Rebecca. He then took his leave, and he afforded ample proof that he considered the case imminent, by basket after basket of medicine being poured in, in regular order, like so many detachments marching in to the relief of a beleaguered town.

Immediately that Mr. Underdown had left her room, Miss Belmont jumped out of bed,

and, on flinging herself into Rebecca's arms, relieved her feeling of the ridiculous by successive bursts of laughter. Rebecca, though she acknowledged all the drollery of their situation, was too much perplexed to join in her mirth. Indeed, she was often on the point of accusing her of heartlessness. Whilst a gentle remonstrance was hovering in her mind, the servant Jenny stole upstairs, without her shoes, and knocked at the door. The ladies resuming the proprieties of a sick chamber, as rapidly as they could, the door was at length opened, and a neatly paper-covered mahogany box was placed in Rebecca's hand, as Mr. Underdown's private medicine-chest. When the girl had retired, Miss Belmont was all anxiety to see her physic—Miss Rebecca, to convey the breakfast to Augustus. However, whilst her friend was arranging the refreshments, Rosa uncovered the box, and nearly fell into hysterics of mirth, at finding it contained neither medicines, nor surgical instruments, but a very complete apparatus for col-

lecting the daily harvest of a gentleman's chin. The razors appeared in the very best order.

This set the two ladies debating again; but, before they could settle the point, whether Mr. Underdown knew all, or only suspected something, Miss Belmont remembered that the gentleman who had caused all this consternation and perplexity, was particularly hirsute about the visage. She reminded Miss Rebecca that this singular medicine-chest had better precede the breakfast; and, if it were demanded, they could only say that it had been locked up and the key lost.

Rebecca then, with the dressing-case under her arm, all trepidation, went, and knocked at the door of her lover.

"Does my Augustus sleep?"

"No, my dear Becky. Is everything safe?"

"Indeed I know not. I think Mr. Underdown suspects that some one is hid on the premises—he behaves so strangely. Are you dressed?"

"Yes—as much as my rags may be called a dress."

"Then, take this, and we will come to you by-and-by." She then gently unlocked the door, and opening it sufficiently, she thrust in the case, and would have closed it again immediately, but Augustus was too quick for her, for he seized her hand and kissed it only as hungry lovers kiss,—who expect to be fed.

"Well," said Rosa, "have you seen him?" as Rebecca returned, her face blushing to her very forehead.

"No."

"Why then all that tell-tale colour."

"He kissed my hand—I dare say he wants his breakfast. The tea and coffee are quite cold. Positively we ought to have a fire."

"There is no doubt of it; the thermometer is only seventy in the shade."

The apothecary had used great despatch. The first basket of medicine was brought up on tip-toe, by the silent Jenny, and received

through the half-closed door by the watchful Rebecca. The servant whispered a message from Mr. Underdown, purporting, that, as they had the prescription of the regular practitioner, they had better refrain from meddling with what his medicine-chest contained.

" I will not be thus tantalised," said Rebecca. " My compliments, Jenny, to Mr. Underdown, and I am coming down to speak with him, for one moment, in the library."

She found Mr. Underdown in deep thought, sitting with a proclamation before him. No smile greeted the beautiful girl upon her entrance; but he rose, and placed a chair for her, in a manner so respectfully polite, that it cut her to the heart. On the table lay a printed piece of paper, surmounted by the royal arms, and commencing with a most magnificently printed " Whereas."

" O Horace Underdown, have I offended you?" said the poor young lady, half-sobbing.

" No, my sweet child, you never stood more

highly in my esteem—in my admiration, than you do now."

"Then kiss me as you used to do, or I will not sit down by you."

"There, angel-face; but we must leave off these pretty fooleries. Positively, since Miss Belmont has been here, you have started, at once, from the child into the woman. Your figure is really hardly known to me."

"Do you like it?" said she, smiling, though there was no joy in her smile; for she said this merely to give herself a pause before she unloaded her heart of its oppressive secret.

"Excessively. It is positively more enchanting that was that of your dear mother. How much your appearance will delight your father!"

"O Horace, don't talk to me about these vanities. By all the love you bear me and mine, tell me,—do you know our dreadful secret?"

"Becky, we all have our secrets, but we will

not, must not, talk about them. Remember that rascal Rubasore's threat! Rebecca, we must not talk about secrets at all. Read that proclamation."

She read it, shuddering.

It was drawn up in the sanguinary spirit of the "good old times." It denounced one Jaques le Meunier, alias Captain Mainspring, as a spy, and one sworn to, upon oath, as a traitor, and out-lawed as a murderer, offering a hundred pounds reward for lodging the same criminal in any of his majesty's gaols. There was a description of his appearance when last seen—a far too faithful one. The proclamation also stated that this person, though professing to be a Frenchman, was actually an English born subject, though he spoke the French language like a native. The proclamation concluded by cautioning all persons against harbouring the said felon, under the severe penalty of being accused as guilty of misprision of treason, or of being deemed as accessory after the fact.

"And what is the penalty for this misprision, as it is called?" said Rebecca, gasping for breath.

"Death. Listen to me, beloved Rebecca." And he then took from its place in the library, a huge volume of the statutes at large, and read extracts from them that made the poor girl's blood stagnate, like ice, in her veins.

"Now, Rebecca, you have heard this; not only is death doomed, but infamy, even to our posterity. I pray you, give me your best attention. I am, myself, joined with your father in the commission of the peace. This proclamation has been sent to me, specially, as a magistrate; and, as such, I am bound, by my oath, to give it due effect."

"This is too dreadful."

"Rebecca, our duty to our country is primal. We must sustain the laws."

"But, Horace, my guardian and my best friend, let me put this case to you. Suppose you had a dear, a younger, a much younger brother; and it was he who is thus described

in this blood-thirsty paper; say, what would you do?"

"If I had information upon oath, or I *saw him myself*, I would arrest him." On the last words he laid a most significant emphasis.

"But if you knew him innocent?"

"I would arrest him still. A jury of his country must acquit him."

"Come, come, I'll press you hardly, my stern sir. Suppose it were my father, your dearest friend?"

"I could not help myself—I could not help him. Your noble father would, himself, order me to do my duty."

"What—what if it were Augustus—the innocent Augustus himself?"

"God in his mercy forbid! Now, Rebecca, you shall try me no more."

"What if it were I—I, myself?" looking up to him through her tears.

"You put an impossible case, my beloved one," kissing her on her brow, and then laying

his hand paternally on her head, for she had, in her agitation, sunk on her knee before him. "And now, my dear Rebecca, you see how vexed I am with this proclamation, and the illness of your friend; you certainly can no longer be so *cruel* as to wish to burthen me with your secrets? Just now, were they light as schoolboy's laugh, they would weigh me to the earth. Keep all about Rosa's bed-room quiet; let the blinds of both your bed-rooms be closed carefully—too much light would be most dangerous. Your great aunt, Lady Jemima, was a very tall woman—what makes me talk such nonsense—only I was thinking that if ever it came into the fashion for men to wear gowns and embroidered petticoats, what a treasure there is contained in the black oak chest at the end of the west gallery for the future young men of the family. You had better now go and watch about your friend. But no *secrets*—you understand me. Now God bless you; and give us a happy issue to this dreadful illness."

"God, in his turn, bless you a thousandfold," said Rebecca, flinging herself into his arms. "What would have become of our family without you?"

Mr. Underdown hastily passed his hands over his eyes, and abruptly left the room.

CHAPTER X.

At every trifle scorn to take offence;
That always shows great pride, or little sense.
Good nature and good sense must ever join,
To err is human—to forgive, divine.

LEFT, for the greater part of the day, entirely to themselves, our young ladies had only to attend to the comforts and the preservation of Augustus, who, dressed up in antiquated female attire, was a singular mixture of the handsome and the ridiculous. Miss Belmont and Rebecca passed as much of their time with him as possible; and the former lady had now entirely recanted her opinion concerning the homeliness of his appearance. She thought him, though a little pale and thin, the beau ideal of

youthful beauty; but she spoke truly, when she told Rebecca that their minds were too similarly constituted ever to permit them to do aught but to admire and wrestle with each other for a spiritual ascendency.

Rebecca was all love and abandonment for Augustus. Her heart had deified him; he was beyond and above all men. For three whole days, whilst he was undergoing this blissful imprisonment, and though Rosa was burning with curiosity, she would not suffer him to relate his adventures; because, she said, he should not degrade himself, by thus indirectly putting himself upon his justification; and, perhaps, she felt herself unequal to bear all that she knew that he must have suffered.

In the meantime, the ladies acquainted him with everything that had occurred. Much did he deplore the dismal state of his mother's mind. At first, they attempted to address him by his title; but it failed; and both

ladies called him usually, by abbreviatives, Gus being the term patronized by Rebecca, and Gusty that by Miss Belmont.

Though thus lapped in indolent luxury, Augustus longed for the open air, activity, and to embrace his mother. He well knew that he could not, for many more days, remain where he was. Some steps must be taken to break the strange nets that the wicked had cast about him. But he still dreaded to go to the prison as a common felon, and stand at the bar and be arraigned for crimes so very foreign to his nature; and with the chances so terrifically, as they now appeared to be, against him.

At length, the irksomeness of this confinement bore heavily upon all of them, with the exception of Rebecca. She wished for no change. He was under her protection—she could listen to his voice almost the whole of the livelong day; and, clasped hand in hand with him, and drinking a passionate life from his eyes, for what more had she to wish?

But Miss Belmont was heartily sick, instead of feignedly so—sick of playing the sick lady. The four daily entrances of the four baskets of medicine were revolting to her; and, though she a little relieved her spleen by mixing them all up together in a water-jug, with the wicked intention of sending them, flavoured strongly with brandy, in half-gallon bottles, as a present of foreign wine to the apothecary, she felt inclined, every time the abomination made its appearance, to fling it out of the window. She dared neither sing nor play; and the amusement of seeing others make love, if they do it badly, is annoying—if well, much worse. So she drew a little, and scolded a little, and yawned a great deal; but, as yet, very heroically, she had refrained from openly complaining.

"My good folks," said she, on the fourth day, "you have entirely cured me of my romance. I grow nauseated at the least term of endearment. If any one were, just now, to call me 'my

beloved,' I should slap his face; and 'my angel' would be as good as a box of the ears to him. Come, come, Gusty, let us have a little common sense. If you go on in this puling way, you will never be fit to wear anything else than that ridiculous old woman's dress, that really *does* become you."

"Shall I swear a little?" said his lordship.

"Ah, do; so as it is not by Becky's bright eyes, or anything of that sort. For the sake of variety, swear us a good round sailor's oath, provided that there be nothing naughty in it."

"By the jeer-blocks, dead-eyes, and catarpin shrouds——"

"O stop, that is too horrible. Only give us your adventures, and tell us why they want to hang you."

"For shame, Miss Belmont."

"Is that your gratitude, Becky, for my being

within death's door, for the best half of an eternity, just to oblige you? Playing at being ill is but ill play, after all, and deserves good words. The adventures, my lord, or I shall walk down stairs; which may be deemed my method of taking up my bed and walking."

"You shall have them, if you'll promise not to belord me any more."

"No, Augustus," said Rebecca; "no adventures, if you please: who ever doubted but that you have always preserved a high character?"

"I don't," said the perverse Rosa; "but let us hear how. Was it very difficult?"

"You slanderous——"

"Well, if we do but preserve ours, after all this—heh, Rebecca; but come, the adventures."

Miss Bacuissart clung the more closely to Augustus, who, gathering up a few of the ample folds of his rich damask gown,

in the manner of a Roman mantle, and surveying the embroidered petticoat, thus disclosed for a moment, as if in thought, commenced his tale.

CHAPTER XI.

Thus Bethel spoke, who always speaks his thought,
And always thinks the very thing he ought.

POPE.

THE commencement spoken of in the last chapter we shall not inflict upon the reader. We shall take up the story at the point when, being on board the Terrific, like a silly fellow that he was, he was upon the point of taking to the salt water.

"I would wish," said he, "to speak respectfully of my uncle; but, Becky dear, he showed himself, at that time, a brute and a tyrant. I appealed to him, in your name, not to flog me—the appeal was vain. I call God to witness, that I did

not contemplate suicide—only escape from ignominy. I even watched for my opportunity. I could swim but little; but when I saw a hen-coop floating past, that had been thrown overboard in preparing for action, from one of the other ships, I determined to confide myself to that rather than trust any more to the tender mercies of the tyrant. I sprang out well through the cabin-windows, and luckily gained my precarious vessel. The old Terrific lagged to leeward dreadfully; and, when the boats were lowered, and were pulling about in her wake, I was half a mile to windward.

"O Rebecca, I was dreadfully cold, and very, very repentant. I thought upon you then—I did indeed; and was sorry that I wrote that incautious letter to my mother. I was tossed about dreadfully, and, first of all, grew very sick; I saw our fleet make sail and leave me; low as I was in the water, they appeared like huge mountains. Several fishing boats passed me; but the night had now set in,

and I felt the cold intense, or, rather, began not to feel it at all. I tried to hail the boats, but my voice was scarcely heard by myself, it was so weak; so, after a few attempts, I abandoned myself to chance.

"Not for one moment did I apprehend that my destruction was near. I had then great faith in my good fortune. It was only when I had men for my adversaries, more cruel and ruthless than the waves, that I began to despair of my fate. But then, Rebecca, I had Providence and the strong flood-tide in my favour; and thus—I will not say that I found myself, for, just then, I had lost all perception—but that I was found under the cutwater of the French admiral's ship."

"Bless me! Cutwater—what is that? Did it wound you?" said Miss Belmont.

"O no, for it is sharp enough to cut only water. The edge is about as broad as a horse's back."

There were many similar interruptions, ex-

planatory of sea-phrases, all occasioned by Rosa, for Rebecca was so absorbed in every word that he uttered, that, if he had spoken Greek, she would not have interrupted him to ask what he meant by it.

"I must say that the old French admiral treated me nobly. In fact, the good man took a liking to me, and, as he was childless, offered to adopt me, and make me his heir. He also endeavoured to instil into me those wild democratical principles that were then steeping France in the best blood of her sons and daughters. He confounded my judgment often by his arguments, but my heart was in England with my mother and Rebecca. So his eloquence could not reach that, you know."

A look of the deepest gratitude repaid him for this piece of incidental gallantry.

"I was kept more than a year in this state of honourable bondage, when, by the freedom with which I too often expressed my opinion of the atrocities then acting in France, having

made many enemies, M. Frèsnoy, the admiral, was forced to part with me. Whilst with him, I wrote several times to England: it appears that no letter of mine ever reached its destination.

"With the letters of recommendation from M. Frèsnoy to the authorities, there went with me also other letters, recommendatory of anything but civil or even christian treatment. I was not allowed to enjoy either the privileges of an officer or of a gentleman. I was confined at Verdun, and confounded with the lowest of the low of all nations that it had been the evil fortune of France to contend with, either by sea or by land. There were there but few English seamen, and those few, with scarcely an exception, had been captured on board our merchant-ships. Even these, if they were healthy, but seldom staid long—generally, I blush to say, entering on board the French men-of-war

"It was intimated to me very plainly, that it was expected that I should do so likewise.

The temptation was great—it was not, Rebecca, the fresh air of the open country, nor the mountain breeze, nor the ever-extending prospect, nor the communion with good men, nor wholesome food, nor the rapture of once more bathing in the running waters—none of these tried me so severely as the hope of escaping and being once more blessed by my mother, once more embraced by my dear little wife; but, then, I had to give my word of honour that escape I would not. Over that barrier I dare not pass, even to you, my love; so I remained, and ate the bitter bread of captivity, and contumely, and insult; and almost died of very weariness of heart."

"My poor Augustus!"

"At length, but not with the remotest hopes of success, but more as an occupation to prevent my mind sinking into fatuity, I commenced planning my escape. I began at first, in mere mockery of myself; but, as I proceeded, a faint hope dawned: the eagerness of life again came over my frame, and I worked, and I under-

mined, and I bribed, and was discovered, and was confined the more severely, and then I recommenced, and, at length, succeeded."

"O tell us all—tell us all."

"It would interest you but little. As yet, every attempt proved abortive. I believe my keepers amused themselves with my proceedings, and let me go just as far as they pleased; and then they came and maliciously crushed all my hopes."

"It was an inhuman cruelty."

"I will never so deem it; these attempts saved me from despair. At length I walked out quietly, without plan, plot, or forethought. Five minutes before, I had reckoned upon almost a life of captivity. I could not, at first, believe that I was on the outside of the hateful fortifications and moats of the depôt."

"But how did you walk?" said Miss Belmont. "Had you the fairy invisible garment, or the seven-leagued boots of Jack the killer of giants, lent you for the occasion?"

"On commemoration of one of Bonaparte's victories—which, I care not now to remember—there was a general festivity throughout the fortress. I will not say that the sentinels and the gaolers who had charge of the numerous wickets were all intoxicated, or intoxicated with anything but the wildest enthusiasm, for with the news of the victory there came three or four large detachments of Austrian prisoners. The depôt was crowded to suffocation. One of the old women who was permitted to enter from the town, and sell, extremely dear, some miserable articles to the prisoners, came in drunk, and, in that state, reeled about the different yards and wards of the prison. In order to make her state afford them the more mirth, some of the French soldiers, off duty, began playing tricks upon her, such as daubing her person and face over with mud, and other such unmanly jokes. At length, overcome with wine and fatigue, she reeled into a corner to sleep. Her persecutors then left her alone, supposing that she would

soon sleep off the effects of her intemperance. The happy thought then struck me of daubing my face with mud and filth also. This done, I filched all her upper garments, piece by piece, got her broad straw hat upon my head, stole her basket, and, throwing a part of my own clothes over her, I commenced staggering towards the gates.

"No one noticed me much, except to give me a curse or an insult; and, as I was pronounced to be too drunk to speak, I was troubled with neither sign nor countersign, but was fairly kicked along the covered-way, over the drawbridge, and across the glacis, with a severe injunction never again to show my face in the walls, which injunction I took care to obey."

"You need not insist upon that point," said Rosa, laughing. "You see that you were born to be an old woman; and, as an old woman, you will ever be the most successful. You have almost won my heart in that beautiful farthin-

gale that I told you before became you so much. Well, how long did your lordship personate the old hawker, and keep her out of her lawful possessions—her cloak, hat, and basket?"

"No sooner was I outside of the walls than I flung them on all sides, and went and washed my face and hands at the first water that I saw, which act of cleanliness nearly again incarcerated me. I had hardly dried my hair and face, when I saw two of the mounted patrol coming at speed towards me. Already had I been missed, and the pursuit commenced. They came to the fragments that I had strewed about on the road, and paused about a minute and a half, taking them up, and examining them. I seized this opportunity, and, crouching down, contrived to creep into a pigsty on the side of the road. You may judge if I had not just made a superfluous ablution.

"My pursuers were soon at the pond which I had just left; when my good stars came to

my assistance, for, as the men were prowling about on all sides, suddenly there started up, about two fields right before them, a man running at full speed across the country. My gentlemen immediately gave chase, in which they were shortly after joined by some chasseurs. Who he was, or why the man ran, will remain a mystery to me, I suppose, until my dying day. However, he had not gone far, before, springing upon a horse that was quietly grazing, without saddle or bridle, but, holding on by the mane, and urging him forward with his heels, away he went; but where to, those only who followed him can tell, excepting himself. I never made any very minute inquiries about it."

"Well now, of all things, I should like to know the history of that man. I wish, Mr. Gusty, you had left that part out. There will now be an unsatisfied curiosity torment me so long as I live. But I beg your pardon; you had placed yourself, very *suitably*, with the pigs."

"Rosa, Rosa, how can you be so inconsiderate?" said Rebecca, almost angry.

"Not very suitably, Miss Belmont; at least, if I can judge by the manner in which they expressed their sentiments. They made such an infernal noise, that one would suppose the little innocents thought that I had come to eat them before their time. The mother, venerable from her age and her amiable *en bon point*, was proceeding to the office of a not civil ejectment—I suppose according to the common law of the land, which considers every pig's pigsty to be her castle. However, I was snouted out. I shall respect a ring ever after: it is true, the old lady wore it in her nose, *à l'Indienne;* but it was still a ring, and saved me, no doubt, from some severe wounds. Evening was now closing in, so seeing a heap of nice bean-straw lying near, I crept into it. What are you laughing at, Rosa?—it was not a dungHill, upon my honour."

"And, if it had been, the transition would have been so natural—from the pigsty."

"I tell you, it was the sweetest bean-straw imaginable. However, I had no inclination for sleep, and, when I found it was quite dark, I crept out to seek for an asylum."

"I suppose you examined the best houses, or, rather, those that seemed the emptiest or the least frequented."

"On the contrary, I looked at neither stones, bricks, nor mortar. They did not constitute the asylum that I sought. I looked for it in the human heart; and, for the way to it, in the human countenance. I was determined to throw myself on the mercy of the first beautiful female face that I saw."

"O Augustus!"

"And O Rebecca!" replied Miss Belmont. "The young man showed infinite wisdom, especially considering the company that he had lately kept, and the toilet that he had lately made; he must have been in a very presentable condition."

"Well, I must confess that no one could have been in a much worse plight; but, luckily, I did not then see myself, and thus my modesty stood not in the way of my presence of mind."

"What a nice phrase that is for—for—"

"For what, sarcastical sorceress?"

"O I don't know! I have not the *impudence* to tell you."

"Well, it is lucky your presence of mind stops short of something. So I retraced my steps to the outskirts of the town, and looked slily into one shop-window, and into another; but was a long while before I could find the face I dare trust: indeed it seemed to me, then, that I should be myself found first."

"I would have fled into the country," said Rosa.

"I could not. I had on only my trowsers and shirt, and a new straw hat that I took off a hedge where it had been placed to bleach."

"I think I have got into very respectable company," said Rosa, shaking her dress, and moving her chair a little farther from his lordship.

"It was in the enemy's country, madam."

"Never mind her, Gus. It will shortly be our turn to laugh."

"Rebecca, I think that is not the worst theft that this reputable person with the new straw hat will shortly confess to, with his prowling about after pretty faces. I will be sententious. He who covets the face will not hesitate to steal the heart."

Augustus blushed, as if the female dress he then wore had been natural to him; indeed, he blushed more than any old lady could—he reddened like a very girl. Rebecca felt herself, for a moment, the daughter of the old Commodore; and the ends of her fingers tingled to be active. There was one subject to her, upon which jesting was no jest. Rosa, in her splenetic mirth, had unfortunately stumbled upon

it. There was an awkward pause, which Augustus employed in adjusting his full dress of satin, and looking very foolish. Rosa saw that she had gone too far; so, after two or three little failures, she possessed herself of Rebecca's hand, and, having kissed it without a word being said, the sunshine of the mind broke forth again from their eyes, and Augustus thus proceeded with his narrative:

"Having no worse design than that of finding a present refuge, and fearing that I should have quickly to walk again *into* that prison, out of which I had taken so much trouble to get, at length I found a face more beautiful than ever I could have hoped to see."

"Where?" was asked at once by both ladies.

"Indeed, it was quite time; for the 'qui va là?' of the patrole was grating on my ears. I say I found it just in time; but I hesitate to tell you where. You, or at least, Rosa will laugh so much, and it would hurt my feelings

to hear anything like mockery connected with that beautiful face."

"I am serious. Say on, Augustus."

"It was in one of the humblest of the barber's shops in the place. The hair-dresser himself was coaxing into order the refractory curls of an old wig, and his daughter was reading to him. The light of her lamp fell upon her face—that face, Rebecca, Rosa,—then appeared to me not of this earth; of course, I saw it under peculiar circumstances, and in a peculiar light. It resolved me in a moment. I walked boldly in. They both rose with a natural politeness. It had been my first intention to have addressed the lady, and, without circumlocution, to have thrown myself upon her charity, and demanded her protection. They both smiled, and before I could open my lips the father spake."

"'Apparently, monsieur would like to wash before he is shaved.'"

A glance at his little mirror showed me the propriety of the suggestion. I bowed in silence.

The young lady brought me ewer and towels, and withdrew. I washed, and resigning myself to my fate, placed myself in the tonsorial chair, and was, for the first time in my life, almost, on my part, unconsciously shaved. Long after the operation, I, not knowing what to say, and wishing the daughter again to enter, sate motionless in the chair, a little pleased, I must confess, that my appearance was a little less brutal than when I entered the humble shop. At length, I was forced to confess that I had no money, and that I was a recently escaped prisoner. Mr. Florentin, for that was the name by which the hairdresser was known, was at a loss what to do with me. He would not betray, but I think, was rather inclined to expel me. Luckily for me, he called mademoiselle down to the council. Humanity triumphed. The asylum, at an infinite risk to them, was granted me. Rosalie was as good as she was beautiful."

"Augustus, you loved," half shrieked out, the now much-affected Rebecca.

"Indeed I did not—I respected, I venerated—yet, in one sense I loved her: who could avoid that? but it was without passion. It was a holy feeling. I said to myself, had but heaven granted me my Rebecca as a wife, and a sister such as Rosalie Florentin, would not my bliss have been too great for one of this earth?"

"What a pity it is that people who are so good should be so handsome!" said Rebecca, not very contentedly. "How many days did you stay with these low people?"

"Not low people—not very low; they are of the noblesse. They are royalists, and had lost all. Florentin was their name of disguise only. They had been persecuted, and proscribed, and had wandered from place to place, wishing to find a means of escape to England. To have been too near the sea-coast would have rendered them suspected."

"I have no doubt but that they were very good sort of people. How many days did you stay with them?"

"Days, Rebecca? I staid months, years. It is little more than a month since I left their hospitable roof, humble as it is. It was they who sheltered me from the persecution of false swearers, when every other door, and every other bosom, was barred against me."

"Mine, Augustus—O mine! These perfidious French!"

"Come, Rebecca," said Rosa, "I do not see much perfidy in these generous French people keeping his lordship from an acquaintance with Newgate. Pray how did you occupy your time with these Florentins."

"They taught me their business. I travelled about with them, sometimes as their apprentice, sometimes as their nephew. I served them faithfully. How else could I prove my gratitude?"

"Hum—ah! it is a delicate question to put to the Earl of Osmondale; but did your lordship ever take—a man by the nose?"

"Rosa, you are as saucy as you are beauti-

ful. That is a question I am not bound to answer. Lord though I may be, I can safely say that I have earned my bread honestly. However, as I don't much like to dwell on this, the most useful part of my life, we will pass over it as rapidly as you please, and merely state, for the satisfaction of Rosa, that I never soiled my hands with a disgraceful action—of Rebecca, that I never once made love to Rosalie. Are you both content?"

As they said that they were, we must believe it. He proceeded thus:

"As it seems not to be pleasing to you, I will not dwell on the time that I was compelled to pass with these very worthy people. We soon found that Verdun was no longer a place of safety for us. We were forced to wander among the most rural towns and villages—sometimes in great danger of being apprehended through some informality in our papers. This mode of life could not last long. M. Florentin's reserved money was fast wasting away, and we

seldom stayed long enough in one place to enable him to gain money by the profession that he had chosen to adopt. We, at length, approached the sea-coast. I then separated from them. I now, I confess, had full opportunity of communicating with my friends in England, but I was fearful of doing so, lest carried away by their love for me, they should be induced to hazard an answer, and thus lead to a discovery and my incarceration, which I really then dreaded more than death.

"M. Florentin, having made his arrangements, departed with his daughter, many months before me, and, by the aid of smugglers, arrived safely in England. I should certainly have gone with them had I had a sufficiency of money to have paid the exorbitant sum demanded for the run across the Channel. The Florentins would have paid it for me could they have commanded the money. I was thus left alone. On the return of the boat, the man gave me the information that the Florentins

were well; and, that with the little money they had left them, they had hired a shop and parlour in town, giving me, at the same time, their address. I had been, by this time, so Gallicised that I passed everywhere for a Frenchman, and I continued to keep the name that I had assumed, as M. Florentin's nephew, Jacque le Meunier."

At this announcement, Rebecca remembering the dreaded proclamation, became very pale, but refrained from speaking.

"Well, people began to know me about the country and the coast. I did not choose to show myself much in the towns. I thus led a very precarious, and, I must add, a hard life. I was, at length, too much tempted. Smothering my principles, under the plea of affection for my mother and my Rebecca, and my relations, and enlisting my patriotism on the same side, I fairly embarked as a smuggler, hoping, when I reached England, to desert. Do you forgive me for this, dearest?"

" There was no harm in it at all, Gus. I would have done so myself."

This assertion of the young lady was rather bold. It was not right to league with the enemy to defraud one's own country of a portion of its much-needed revenue. Not quite. However, the assertion satisfied the person most concerned, who kissed her for it heartily, and thus resumed.

" But, my new comrades, supposing me to be, what I had always passed for, the nephew of a royalist and an émigré, they watched me narrowly whenever we were on the English coast, and whilst they were employed on shore, running their tubs and laces, I was always left with those who had charge of the vessel, and thus I was compelled to make several trips before I had once more the opportunity of placing my foot on the English shore."

" You don't happen, my lord, to have any of those beautiful laces about you, you have

just mentioned? I hope you will, as a purchaser, give me the preference."

"Don't be provoking, Miss Belmont, or I shall take away the preference that I have already given you."

"May I humbly beg your leave, sir, to ask, to whom I am preferred?"

"To every body, except—"

"I except to all exceptions; let us hear how you prospered as a smuggler."

"I learned something—how to manage a boat—and I became so conversant with the soundings, and nature of the bottom of the Channel, that when all other lawful occupations fail me, I shall make an excellent—"

"You shall never go to sea any more, in any capacity—I have made up my mind to that, Augustus. I hate the sea."

"The old Commodore's daughter should not say so. However, I must now come to the worst part of my story. With the connivance

of the French authorities, a party of spies, incendiaries, and wild theorists for the overturning of governments, was to be landed on our coasts, well furnished with all manner of forgeries and treasonable correspondence, with the disaffected in England. I endeavoured to ingratiate myself with these jacobins, most of whom were either Irish or aliens. Without committing myself by any decided promises, I was at length permitted to join them. We landed near Dover at midnight, and thence proceeded, by by-ways and cross-roads, and only during the night, to London."

"But why not leave them directly?"

"Alas! I found that I had only changed one set of tyrants for another. Little was my joy on being once more in my native land. I should never have been mean enough to have denounced my companions; but in London I knew that they could not prevent my escape, so I resigned myself until I should arrive there.

" Among villains there is always some one more villanous than the rest, who only seeks his opportunity to betray them. I now know that the motions of this splendid army of invasion of half-a-dozen, was perfectly known to the government, and even the very house at which we were to rendezvous, prepared for our reception; for no sooner had we seated ourselves, and in the midst of their congratulations at our safe arrival, and our security, than a party of the police burst upon us, and attempted a wholesale capture. Unfortunately for me, it was not strong enough. They were overpowered, bound, gagged, and locked up in a deep cellar, with the exception of one of the officers, who was left weltering in his blood on the first-floor. The man who, with his dagger, inflicted the fatal wound, was the leader of the gang, a Captain Mainspring, as he was called, though I believe it was a *nom de guerre.*

" They hurried me, with the rest, downstairs. Conscious of my innocence, and proud in my

integrity, I refused to fly with the rest. They then immediately pronounced me to be the spy and the traitor who had sold them. I can only remember the flashing of their eyes, and their uplifted hands; when next I awoke to consciousness my situation was most horrible.

"Seated on the floor, the clothes which I had on, which were not mine, dabbled in blood, and upon me a dreadful weapon stained with gore to the very hilt, I found myself near the wounded officer, who had just recovered from a fainting fit, and was making feeble efforts to cry out for assistance. The room was soon filled; the officers below released, and I was taken as the murderer, dressed in the clothes of Captain Mainspring, who had escaped in mine.

"I was so confounded with this strange event, and so troubled with the severe blow that I had received on my head, that I could not speak. The wounded man was immediately conveyed to the nearest hospital, and myself to Clerkenwell prison."

Here a cry of horror broke from both ladies, and they flung themselves into each other's arms. After their very natural emotion had a little subsided, Augustus proceeded.

"There remains but little to be told; but that little is very dreadful. The next day I was examined before a full bench of magistrates; among which, if my memory serves me faithfully, was that disagreeable neighbour of yours, Mr. Rubasore."

"Heavens preserve us! Go on, Augustus."

"I am almost sure that it was he; indeed, I am certain of it. He eyed me most attentively, and once put a question to me that seemed irrelevant to the rest of the magistrates—'Had I ever been in the neighbourhood of Trestletree Hall?' Fool that I was, I said not. I felt that my disgrace would have extended to those dearer to me than my own existence. What injury would the world have suffered, had one innocent but useless young man been

hung, under the name of Jacques le Meunier? but the misery would have been ineffable, the disgrace eternal, upon both our families, if the felon had died as the acknowledged son of Lady Astell, and the nephew of Sir Octavius Bacuissart."

"Another word like that, and I cease to love you," said the passionate Rebecca.

"The true account that I gave of the transaction was listened to with ineffable contempt; and the treacherous papers found upon me, added, in no small degree, to the prejudice already existing against me. It was in vain that I pleaded the blow I had received from the real Captain Mainspring; for one of the runners swore that it was he himself who had knocked me down, when I was most active in the scuffle. But the severest trial was yet to be endured. Accompanied by two magistrates, I was led to the Middlesex Hospital, and placed near the dying officer. Poor man! he pretended to recognise me immediately. He de-

clared, without hesitation, that I was his murderer."

"May God forgive him!" said Rebecca.

"For that act, dearest, there is nothing to pardon; no doubt but that he spoke to the best of his belief. I was then led back, after this man's deposition had been taken, and fully committed to Newgate for trial. Seeing the weakly state in which I was, the officers who had me in charge did not handcuff me, but placed me between them, in a hackney-coach. These proceedings had worn away all the day, and it was nearly dark when we proceeded towards the prison. Every house was illuminated, and bonfires were blazing in the streets, on account of some great naval victory."

"How fervently I hope my father's!"

"And numbers of idle men and mischievous boys were flinging squibs and crackers among the crowd. In passing through a narrow street, where the crowd was dense, and in the middle of which a bonfire was blazing, the horses be-

came frightened; one of my guards was for going forward, the other for turning back. Squibs and crackers flew about the coachman's head; the populace began to enjoy the fun: the coach was urged on, until the horses' feet felt the fire: they reared up, and overturned the carriage nearly upon the burning wood and shavings. The door flew open, I jumped out, and long before the officers could pick themselves up, and explain to the amused and laughing crowd who they were, I was many streets off, and entirely lost to the view of the runners.

"The dagger that was in possession of one of my guards, in order to be produced as evidence against me, I had caught up, with almost the instinct of self-defence. I gave it you, Rebecca, in the preserve."

"I will never touch the horrid weapon again, Augustus. It lies there."

"There let it lie. It has certainly drunk the life's blood of one human being. I will not handle

it again, but upon hard necessity. In the forlorn condition that I then was, I remembered me of the residence of the Florentins; and, after some little trouble, I discovered it. They once more harboured and saved me."

"Those Florentins again!" said the younger lady, reproachfully.

"But the vigilance of the police was not so easily baffled; I was traced to my refuge, and but barely saved myself. My heart yearned once more to see Trestletree Hall—to learn who still might be there, and, if possible, to take counsel with Mr. Underdown; but, at all events, to avoid a prison."

"Underdown would surrender you to the laws, be assured of it, Augustus. What shall we do?"

"I cannot longer remain here. What a blessing would it now be, could I see my uncle! He would have none of Mr. Underdown's fine-spun scruples. He would find me an honest and intelligent lawyer; or remove me from the

country until I could make my innocence apparent."

"Rosa," said Rebecca, "I am too agitated to write. You have heard all. Write to Sir Octavius instantly—conceal nothing. I will despatch the letter directly it is finished: and the fleetest horse in the stables shall carry the messenger."

Rosa retired to her own room; and, for the first time, the young lovers were alone together.

CHAPTER XII.

"... If e'er you saw the sky
When it was clearest, it never could come nigh
Her virgin veins in colour, and yet her love
Made his as eagle fierce."

OLD POET.

DURING these four days, Mr. Underdown was almost in a state of misery. The farce of Miss Belmont's infectious fever was believed by all the household, and every visiter scrupulously excluded. Though the mansion was generally shunned by all its neighbouring gentry, there was one evil and watchful eye continually upon it. Need we say that it was Mr. Rubasore who did it the honour to place it under his surveillance?

This gentleman had remarked, that, besides the letters brought by the post, two, and very often three, expresses would arrive at and leave Trestletree Hall in the course of the day. These messengers, he had ascertained, came from and returned to the old Commodore; and he rightly conjectured that this active correspondence with Mr. Underdown concerned the proclaimed murderer, whom he, Mr. Rubasore, was well aware was none other than Augustus.

The ladies of the family were little less unhappy than was Mr. Underdown. They feared for the worst; though they only supposed the danger lay with Miss Belmont, and her constant attendant, Miss Bacuissart. Mr. Underdown seldom joined them, and, when with them, his stay was always as short as possible. To the iterated question, "Where is the Commodore—why comes he not?" he could only reply, that he would shortly make his appearance, but that he was unavoidably detained in town upon business of the most vital importance.

Every one at Trestletree Hall thought that this fourth day of the days of refuge would never end, excepting the two lovers.

But let us now, for a little space, attend the operations of the old Commodore. In the metropolis, gold is omnipotent; lay but a sufficiency of it on the eyelids of the lawyer, and what scales will fall from his eyes, and how clear-seeing will he instantly become! Sir Octavius took three of the most clever into instant pay—the Florentins were soon discovered; and from them he immediately learned all that concerned his nephew. He never doubted his innocence; and he also pretty well knew where, and in what manner, he was concealed. He was by no means displeased at this.

The next step was to do away with the damning and circumstantial evidence against Augustus. Unfortunately, the man had died shortly after he had declared his nephew to be his murderer. The other officer, who had sworn to the knocking of him down, after three

satisfactory conferences with the three lawyers employed by the old Commodore, unswore all that he had sworn before. But the principal point was to catch, if possible, the real Captain Mainspring. We hardly need mention that immense rewards were offered to any of the gang that would chance to become informers.

Sir Octavius, after he had paid his duty to his king, was generally to be found stumping about from the home-office to the police offices; or giving audience to Bow-street runners, thieves and thief-takers of all descriptions. He asked neither for stars, ribbons, nor honours. "Only give me back my nephew, with untarnished honour," was his reply to the minister With all his honours newly blushing upon him, and in the midst of his justly-acquired popularity, to a request so moderate every exertion was used to give a satisfactory reply. Thus, every facility was afforded him; and, for a time, he might have been said to have exchanged

the command of his squadron for that of the police force of the metropolis.

In all these exertions, Captain Oliphant acted as his assistant and aide-de-camp. The great object of the Commodore was to avoid a public trial: or, if that were impossible, not to go to the bar until such evidence were produced as would ensure a triumphant acquittal.

Fortune, at length, thinking that she had enough worried the worthy old Commodore, and too much persecuted his nephew, now began to make the most ample amends. One of the gang turned king's evidence, and, through his information, the real Captain Mainspring was, after a desperate resistance, that caused another murder, taken.

His confession, and the evidence of the other, so fully exonerated Augustus from all suspicion, that the warrants against him were immediately discharged, and an order of the secretary of state for the home department readily granted for his release, if unfortunately he should hap-

pen to be anywhere in custody upon this matter. So, about seven o'clock in the evening, every thing being thus happily adjusted, Sir Octavius and Captain Oliphant seated themselves in the travelling carriage of the former, both shouting "To Trestletree Hall!" in a breath; and off they started as joyous a pair of gentlemen as ever rattled after four high-bred galloping bays.

Dash on, ye gallant steeds. Spurn the dull earth beneath your fire-eliciting hoofs. Draw in, through your extended nostrils, strength from the invigorating breeze; wince not at the whip, rebel not at the spur; on your speed depends the happiness or desolation of many fond and good hearts. Away with ye—away!

At this very time the lovers were alone. The day had been sultry, and the evening was still and close. These four days of confinement had made Rosa languid and ill. For her, there was not the excitement of the mutual pressure of fond hands, or the interchange of soul-endearing

glances. She had, at the request of Rebecca, written a long and useless letter to the old Commodore. It had been despatched. She had now no occupation; her resolution gave way, and she had retired to her own room to weep from very lowness of spirits.

Augustus had also drooped like the caged wild bird of the mountains. He was querulous, and impatient of many things, and of none more than of the antiquated and womanly disguise that he was compelled to wear. He would almost have preferred the blood-stained rags of the murderer that, but a little while ago, he had so indignantly cast away.

"O Rebecca! to-night I must fly this place."

"Impossible! what means my beloved?"

"I cannot bear this disguise. Let me once more stand before my fellow-men as a man. If God permit their eyes to be blinded, and they pronounce me guilty, they shall see that I can suffer like a man, and an innocent one."

" These words are horrors. What mean you, Augustus? You are feverish. Lay your burning cheek to mine, it is cooler—there—Augustus, is not this better than manacles upon the hands, and the heavy irons upon the feet? Are my arms that now so tenderly bind you, unpleasant bonds? Come, come, Augustus, smile—only one little smile for your madcap wife. There, that is well. You should always look so—you are so very, very beautiful when you smile! Are you not happy now?"

" At once too happy and too miserable—I should not have come here. What an immensity of damnation should I not deserve if I were to break your gentle heart; you would die if I should be led to the scaffold—poor thing—you would die!"

" Assuredly, Sir Earl; but I will not be pitied for it, sir," said she, poutingly and proudly. " You risked your life to shun the ignominy of the lash; am I so beneath you, Augustus, that I may not glory in dying for you,

who would rather have died than be disgraced? O my Augustus, I am a poor simple thing, but I have a strong heart; but let us talk no more of dying or of scaffolds. The angels who protect innocence are doing our work for us unseen. There, that is like one of Rosa's speeches. Is she not beautiful even to a fault?"

"Most faultlessly beautiful, you mean, Rebecca."

"No, no, dull one; it would have been a fault in my eyes had you so found her; but this is nonsense. Is not this stillness delicious?"

"Frankly, I do not find it so. I long to breathe the fresh air—to look upon the blue vault of heaven—to drink in, at my eyes, the wide green prospect before us; for a very little while withdraw the blinds, and throw up the casement."

"There is danger in it, love."

"Not a whit—who can see into this room? Besides, the lawns and shrubberies are deserted—none come to the back of the house; delight me, dearest, with the fresh air."

Obediently she arose and removed the blinds, and threw up the window.

"Ah! this is delicious; that balcony — I shall ever love that balcony! It was there that my fainting heart, after many days of sickness, was re-assured; it was there that I heard your voice; the tones fell upon me as if I were bathing in showers of bliss; the beauty of your figure deceived me, though I knew your voice at once."

"Flatterer, if you so attempt to spoil me, I will wear my pinafore again, and once more let my rough hair float about my shoulders."

"You will not be so cruel; it would be the death-blow to your aunt Matilda. Let us come and stand upon the balcony; it shall be sacred to us, and we will call it the 'Altar of Constancy.'"

"Do not wish so rash a thing."

"It is not rash—I long to gaze about me upon the old scenes, where, as children, we have so often played. Come, Rebecca, there is no

danger. If perchance a servant or a peasant saw us, what can they say—only that there were a very tall and a very graceful lady standing at the balcony of Miss Bacuissart's window."

"Augustus, you do not look like a lady, though you wear the richest lady's dress in the county. And your head of hair—"

"O cover it with anything that you like, only let us go to the balcony. The sun will soon set, and it is so delightful, though sadness is often mixed with the delight, to look upon the setting sun!"

For what could Augustus plead in vain when it was to Rebecca that he sued? Laughing a little, and fearing much, she placed a muslin cap on his head, and hand-in-hand they stepped forth into the balcony. They counted not time by minutes. There they stood, exchanging vows of affection, and giving vent to the fondest feelings of their bosoms. So entranced were they with each other, that they heard not, or hearing, did not attend to, the noise made by the

repeatedly flinging up, and rapidly slamming down, of the window of Mr. Underdown's room.

At length they were startled from their love-reverie to some purpose, for they heard Mr. Underdown exclaim, in a voice of thunder, "Who skulks there? John, bring me the blunderbuss."

The lovers crept back into their apartment aghast, and took care not only to close the window, but the blind also very carefully.

"Push on, gallant old Commodore; if ever you possessed energy display it now. The dagger of the murderer will soon tremble over the bosom of your beloved daughter; and, horrible to be told, it will glance from her own hand."

It was ten o'clock, and nearly dark, for the moon was just struggling through the forest-girt horizon. Rebecca and Rosa were upon the point of taking leave of the melancholy Augustus, when a tremendous noise was heard at the outer door of the mansion.

"I am discovered—they come!" exclaimed

Augustus. "Listen; they are breaking in the front door."

"To the balcony! fly to the preserve," ejaculated Rebecca. The balcony afforded no view of escape. Many men were observed stationed on the lawn beneath the window.

"If I am arrested *now*, Rebecca, I am sacrificed. I will sooner die."

"I will die with you."

I am compelled to say that Miss Belmont, who had so often in imagination played the heroine, stood now completely paralysed.

"Rebecca, could we but gain a little time, I might reach the attics, and perhaps escape over the roof. But these infernal petticoats. How can a man climb, or run, or fight in them?"

"Rouse thee, Rosa; don't you understand? Augustus is in danger; we must set fire to the house, he may, he shall, escape in the confusion. Here, empty your wardrobe—bring all the bedclothes—the curtains; pile them up in the centre of the passage. Do the fools think they

shall take us like sheep penned up for the knife?"

Poor Rosa, more dead than alive, obeyed. At the top of the avenue that led to the bed-rooms, there was quickly heaped up a very respectable funeral-pile of musty dresses, linen, and other combustible matter. When this arrangement was fully completed, Rebecca forcibly thrust Rosa without the pile. "Go, my good girl," said the excited creature, "you are kind-hearted, accomplished, and beautiful, but you are not worthy to share fates with me and Augustus. Now, my love, we will escape in the confusion, when the fire rages most."

"I cannot suffer it," said her cousin, "give me that candle—one victim is enough—Rebecca, I command you to cast away that dagger—it is unseemly in the hands of a woman."

But just then Rebecca proved herself the daughter of her father, and for all reply, threw the lighted candle into the combustible heap before her. In a moment, the flames arose,

and everything was hidden in smoke. The heat and vapour were suffocating, and Augustus was forced, with Rebecca, to retreat to the back of the house, and fling open all the windows.

Just then the old Commodore turned the corner through the lodge-gates, and beheld the back of his house in flames. "Drive on, rascals, for your lives," he bellowed forth. "That's my Becky's doing, Noll, by heavens it is! She once set my house on fire because I sent her to bed supperless; the flames are in her room. It must be some madness of hers, to protect Augustus. Drive, ye rascals, drive!"

The panting horses were put to their utmost speed; the quarter of a mile of park was scoured in an almost impossibly short space of time, and Sir Octavius and Captain Oliphant rushed into the mansion over the fragments of the broken door. The grand marble staircase was crowded with men, some with buckets, endeavouring to extinguish the fire, others with staves and cutlasses, endeavouring to pass the burning

barrier at the top of the staircase. Everything stood out fearfully distinct in a vivid red light. The confusion was horrible, and the screams of the women confounded the heads, and rent the hearts, of the men. Near the burning mass stood Mr. Underdown, with the apparently lifeless body of Rosa in his arms, most pathetically addressing Augustus and Rebecca, to save themselves and yield to those who were stationed at the back of the house, as that appeared the only method of safety.

But the most prominent figure on the top stair was Mr. Rubasore, attended by another magistrate, with the proclamation in his hand, urging the men to rush through the flames and take the criminal alive, promising to double the reward offered in the proclamation.

By this time, much of the smoke had dispersed, but the wainscotting of the passage, and the rafters of the ceiling above, and of the floor beneath, burnt fiercely; and behind this transparent group of fire, stood a tall figure,

dressed in the womanly costume of the olden time, bearing in his right-hand, pike-wise, a large bed-post, and with his left endeavouring to wrench that unsheathed dagger from a young and most beautiful female. In that strange light they seemed not mortal.

The old Commodore and Captain Oliphant were at the top of the stairs in an instant. The astonished old sailor was, for one single instant, so overcome, that he was only able to shout forth, "Save my children!" And then his boiling bosom striving for vent, instead of a monstrous oath, he roared out, "*Néstroque*."

At this shout the obstinate Rebecca threw down the dagger, and flung herself into the arms of Augustus, crying, "We are saved—I hear the battle-cry of our house—it is my father!"

That father, catching hold of Rubasore with his iron hook, hurled him backwards down the long flight of marble steps, then rushing over the burning floor, the fine old sailor caught his

dear Becky in his arms, and, followed by Augustus, repassed in safety the flames; and, as he rushed down the staircase with his burden, no one thought of capturing the attending Augustus; but every soul, constables and Bow Street officers not excepted, took off their hats, and as they passed, rent the very roof with their huzzas.

The father bore his daughter into the nearest room on the ground-floor. How fondly she clung to him—how rapturously he wept over her! Captain Oliphant and Mr. Underdown followed immediately with Rosa. "Here, Underdown," said the Commodore, "take this order from the secretary of state, and show it to the magistrate and thief-takers; clap buckets into their hands, and bid them put out the fire; man all the pumps in the house, and let them pass the water from hand to hand, man-of-war fashion, from the moat in the ha-ha—Noll will take care of that beauty. My ward, I presume. Gus, my boy, give your old uncle a buss; now rub the taste off your lips

upon Rebecca's. Fine goings on, hey! O you sly rogues—and to think the old fellow didn't know all about it. Why, I was slaving my heart out for you, you rogues. Hoity, toity—why, how's this? Becky's a woman, by all that's glorious, and a glorious woman too! I left her a bonny child three months ago, and mark ye me now—there she stands— Master Augustus, Master Gus, clap a paul on the capstan?"

"The Earl of Osmondale," said Rebecca, smiling through her tears.

"Earl me no earls; was he not my nephew before he was an earl—an earl in petticoats and a brocaded farthingale—hum. Noll, lend him a suit of uniform."

"No, dear uncle; I'll put on anything but that."

"But, my dearest father, you forget that your house is on fire."

"Well, suppose I do, hussey; arn't I happy enough to forget anything? O Becky, I should so like just one glass of cold rum-and-water!"

The fire was extinguished. It is time to close this chapter; explanations are tedious things, and raptures read heavily. Blissful that night were the slumbers of every inmate at Trestle-tree Hall.

CHAPTER XIII.

"To the reader who reads me to praise,
Farewell; and God prosper his days!
To the reader who reads me to blame,
Farewell; and I wish him the same.
Much good to the writer will fall,
Will readers but read him at all."

JOHN DORY'S POEMS.

Two days of almost unalloyed happiness followed. Augustus, however, spoke much, and thought more, of his mother, and a great deal was stated as to the manner in which his being still alive should be broken to her. The old Commodore pertinaciously refused to allow the young Earl to depart, insisting that, as he had preserved him, he had the best right to keep him. However, it was arranged on the

third day, that Horace Underdown, who had been so often the maker and the messenger of peace, should be the bearer of the glad-tidings, and, as they knew that he would act with the utmost discretion, they all thought no arrangement could be better. This mission of charity was spared him.

Lady Astell, poor, desolate woman, had been in a pitiable state of mind, and, under the mask of piety, in an incessant rebellion against Providence. She, every month, grew more gloomy and more ascetic, conversing with none but her spiritual advisers, and selecting those from the most severe, and, may I add, without incurring blame, the most darkly superstitious of the priesthood.

But, even in her retreat, the news of her brother's glorious victory reached her; and a reverend sectarian, having acquainted her that vanity fair was held daily at Trestletree Hall, she ordered forth her funeral-like equipage, and proceeded, as she deemed, for the sake of his

soul's salvation, to throw the sinner down from his couch of fancied happiness.

Mr. Underdown had just made his arrangements to depart, when the porter at the lodge announced that the dark equipage was coming. This excited a great sensation in all. Augustus felt so unnerved that he was forced to seat himself. The Commodore looked serious, but not disturbed. Indeed, a religious serenity pervaded his features.

The Commodore caused all his family, without exception, to be assembled, and placing himself in the centre, with Augustus on his right and Rebecca on his left, silently awaited the awful interview. The young lovers trembled excessively. Augustus promised not to speak until bidden by his uncle. The heavy black coach arrived at the door; every male-servant that the establishment could muster was arrayed in the hall to do her reverence, and the groom of the chambers preceded her with more respect than if she had been a queen. Dressed

as before, in the deepest black, and the white band of lawn covering her forehead, she advanced with her usual stately step into the centre of the room, and fronted the old Commodore, who rose from his chair and bowed to her solemnly. Many hearts then beat tumultuously. She spoke not until she had taken the letter from her bosom. In doing this, her looks met those of Augustus, from whose eyes the tears were streaming plenteously. She pressed her hand to her bosom, and uttered a sharp cry, then rubbing her eyes, like one awaking from a dream, she shook her head mournfully and spoke.

"I am here, the widow, and she whom you made childless."

"Sister, you are most welcome," said the Commodore, gravely.

"Here is my warrant;—murderer — my child!"

"Agnes, I deprived you of one—I restore you two in return. Kneel to her, my children."

"What is this—who is this youth?" for

Augustus, kneeling before her, had already seized her hand, and, pressing it to his forehead, was bathing it with his tears.

"Agnes, it is Augustus, whom I restore to you."

"And is it so? and are you even he—my son? Speak!"

"Mother!"

The word shot like electricity through her bosom. She fell into his arms, and wept.

"Let us leave them for a space," said the brother.

And they all walked forth, with the awe with which we should tread the sacred floor of the holy of holies, in the inner tabernacle. And was not the spirit of the Eternal there, doing his beneficent work with the long-bereaved mother and her restored child?

There was a strange scene, that day, in the park of Trestletree Hall. Outriders, grooms, and footmen, in the deepest mourning, with white favours in their hats, and huge bunches of nosegays in their bosoms; and the horses,

and the hearse-like coach, were driven full gallop through the park, all the way to Astell House: the men shouting and hallooing like so many boys broken loose from school. The coach, and black horses, and liveries, disappeared, as if by magic—they were never again seen in the county.

Lady Astell, from a room to which she had retired, sent a sisterly letter to the old Commodore, telling him that she intended to reside some time with him. She did not make her appearance again until dinner-time; and then, how changed! She was dressed in pure white, and in her matronly cap she wore roses. She entered the saloon, supported, on either side, by her son and her niece. Without speaking one single word, she went up to her brother, and embraced him.

What more shall I say? Her morbid illusions were dispelled. She was, perhaps, more supremely happy than any of the others, great as was their happiness. After dinner, the

Commodore begged, as a great favour, that he might be allowed to smoke one pipe over his dessert and wine. The pipe was brought, filled, and duly rammed down with the stopper at the end of his arm. The wax candle was burning on the table, but he made no use of it. At length, he spoke, with a voice almost indistinct from emotion, thus—"Agnes, dearest, haven't you some scrap of waste, useless paper, that you can give your poor old brother to light his pipe with?"

"I had forgot—I had forgot," said Lady Agnes, in a troubled manner, drawing from her bosom the once terrible letter from Augustus. She took it up, and twisted it carefully; then, rising from her seat, stooped over the old Commodore, and, kissing his forehead, lighted the paper.

He took it from her hand, and, in lighting his pipe with it, he took the greatest care that every morsel of it should be burned; that was not enough: he rubbed the ashes of it into a fine

powder, and bidding Rebecca sweep them up into the palm of his hand, he stepped out upon the lawn, and scattered them to the winds.

He then returned to his pipe, which he smoked out with the sublimest self-satisfaction.

I have but little to tell of the after-life of this now united and happy family. It was some days before Peter Drivel would venture into the presence of the old Commodore. At last, his master, Captain Oliphant, compelled him to do so, and that, too, when all the family was assembled, and a large party also.

The moment Sir Octavius saw him, he pretended to be in his wonted passion, and to look round for something to fling at his head.

"The punning rascal!" he roared out, "and nothing to knock him down with."

Peter made for the door, expecting nothing less than the poker to be ringing out the tune of "Down, derry down" upon his skull. But his master prevented his escape, whilst the old sailor, making a pretence of not being able to

find anything else, plucked forth from his waistcoat pocket a purse well filled with gold, and flung it, with a purposely bad aim, towards him.

"Pick it up!" roared Sir Octavius.

Peter obeyed in a tremble.

"Pocket the affront; and beat that practical pun, if you can, you grinning varlet."

Peter confessed his inability; and, for ever after, was very assiduous in his attendance about the baronet's person.

I have but little more to say about Peter, excepting that he endeavoured to reduce punning to a system; and, not having very much to do, he took Ainsworth's English Dictionary, and compiled every possible pun that could be made upon every word in it, beginning at A and ending at Z. He wished to publish this, but I dissuaded him from it; as it would have been the means of starving three fourths of the wits about town. However, I bought it myself, though, upon my honour, I never made use of

it; but if any small author is about to dine out, by application at the publisher's, I will allow him to peruse this punning dictionary, at the cheap rate of a guinea an hour—he could not lay out his money better. Play-wrights may enjoy the same advantages, at double the price. N. B. No maker of jest-books need apply.

I have lived to see strange revolutions. M. Florentin and his daughter returned to France with the Bourbons; the one a count, and the other afterwards became a princess. They were never very intimate with the Earl and Countess of Osmondale; I believe it was not my lord's fault.

Mr. Rubasore received a terrible internal hurt when the old Commodore hurled him down stairs. He brought his action, both civilly and criminally. In the civil action, he recovered five pounds odd shillings, which Sir Octavius very cheerfully paid; in the criminal action, the old Commodore was fined one

shilling, which, to Rubasore's great mortification, went to the king. He sold his place in Hertfordshire; but, finding himself getting worse, and neglected by everybody, he called Mrs. Dredgely to his assistance, who soon cajoled him, weakened as he was in mind and body, to marry her. He grew worse afterwards, and as she had vowed, she had her revenge; which actually shortened a life that was fast drawing to a conclusion. She administered to him, in some mutton broth, the fatal one pound note, over which she had sworn her revenge, and then told him of it. He is gone. I bear his memory no malice, though he called me fool, driveller, and pensioner; and I trust that the Great Judge of all will try him by himself. Truly, nature had not given him much, wherewithâl to fructify into goodness.

In due course of time, the Earl of Osmondale married the heiress of Trestletree Hall; and Captain Oliphant the mistress of Jaspar Hall. I can say no more about it than that they

could scarcely be happier; for they had fine children—some of whom are now grown up—and the ladies always ruled their husbands.

The Commodore served again and again, and always with credit; and, at last, died at a great age, an admiral of the red. He was latterly, notwithstanding his virtues, not very popular with some people in authority, for he persisted in making his ships the best manned in the fleet, by a steady perseverance in working upon the crew's good principles, and, by kindness, keeping their bad ones as dormant as possible. What a general reproach was this to many other people!

Albeit, the admiral spoiled one man, and that was Daniel O'Sullivan. He was the constant loiterer about the Hall; disdaining to work, making all the men jealous and all the women pert, and of no earthly use, excepting building little ships, and sticking commodores' broad pennants upon them. He was a most abomi-

nable, and not-to-be-restricted liar. Towards the close of his life, Sir Octavius was himself rather given to excess of amplification, more particularly after dinner at a large party.

He was terribly prone to fight M. Frèsnoy and La Magnifique at every jovial sitting. At first, and for a year or two after the event, he was content with only having ordered Dan to put the admiral in his own locker; then, Sir Octavius did it with his own hand; and, in a year more, he had, with that single hand, not only locked up the admiral, but also his captain of the fleet. When this part of the story was arrived at, O'Sullivan was always sent for to vouch for the accuracy of the statement. What a man he was for vouching!

As it often happens, Sir Octavius at last did not know what were the real facts. Latterly, his story ran that he had put the admiral and fifteen of the officers in the ship's coppers; and then, as Peter Drivel said, the Commodore usually made a *mess* of it.

The glorious old man has now gone down—honoured, loved, and mourned—to his grave. In the midst of his grandchildren, his last years were supremely blest. He is now in heaven!—methinks it would be impiety to judge otherwise. His vast estates went to his son-in-law, who makes a noble use of his inherited and acquired wealth. Lady Astell and Miss Matilda are no longer among the happy on earth; they faded from mortality, like fragrant lights sending up their incense above. I am almost alone. Underdown, the meek, the good, and the kind, is still spared to me. Have I not then, considering all things, enough of happiness?

My task is finished. My eventful tale is told. Upon looking back upon it, I am not dissatisfied. No doubt but that the faults are numerous, but *I* have not been able to discover many of them. Those that have, may they cover them with the mantle of my good intentions. I know that my dates are incorrect; but an anachronism does not necessarily destroy a fact. This confusion of dates I endeavoured to rectify; I compared documents, I consulted authorities, I talked with my principal characters that were then living, with the almanack compiled by Thomas Moore, gentleman and physician, in my hand; and, when my task was done, my dates were no less confused than before, and my mind much more so. What, in such complicated matters, can be expected at my years? There is one date that I shall never read, accurate as it will be—too soon will it be cut deeply in the stone; but this is prosing in the very overflowing of senility—the pouring out the dregs

of the wine-cup, drop by drop, when the wine is gone, and the cup echoeth with emptiness.

I came to write this tale thus:

As we approach nearer and more near to the other and better world, glimpses of it break in upon us; in those awful visitings, a spiritualization purifies the soul, and we see darkly the images of great truths. It was not until the sun of immortality, which, though yet far below the horizon, had gilded with its blessed twilight the clouds of this my mortal world, that I discovered, by its faint emanations, what I consider to be a moral truth.

On this I pondered for days and nights, and months and years; and, with reflection came memory, who offered me up her, till then, neglected treasures. They bore out my hypothesis; and I wrote this true history of some passages in the life of the old Commodore.

If any think that I, the aged mariner, wrote these volumes through a more than usual degree of vanity or love of lucre, I forgive

them, and tell them that I compiled them for a nobler purpose—to teach us how to reform ourselves and to amend others, by working with the good that is within us and not the evil—to smother, to crush, all that is bad in our natures by kindness, benevolence, and a never-tiring forbearance—to give it no room, not only to fructify, but even to show itself. In the very worst, what magnificent capabilities of improvement do there not exist? In this, how superior are we to the angels! They are perfect in their natures—their limits are fixed; but we, worms as we are below, what may we not become above!

Let us no more work with the evil in our natures—by fear, by false shame, by physical torture. The man who wantonly excites fear in another, is a meaner creature than the coward himself.

Until great and unlooked-for kindness entered upon the heart of the old Commodore, what a sad picture of perverted humanity he showed

himself! Kindness reformed him, and he, with kindness, reformed others; but it is in early youth that we must try this principle—never to punish by torture of mind or body.

I had thought, before I died, of making a large book of ethics upon this non-exasperating system, only my good Underdown has almost persuaded me that my talent does not lie that way; thus I have composed something very like a novel, in which I wish to show the ineffable beauty of striving to be true Christians, not in profession but in practice, and to inculcate the divine maxim of DOING AS WE WOULD THAT OTHERS SHOULD DO UNTO OURSELVES.

THE END.

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